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Postponing the Plutonium Economy

Should Britain develop 'a plutonium economy'? It almost looked at one time as if the momentous step of greatly expanding our nuclear power, mainly by building fast-breeder reactors, was going to be taken while the nation slept. Mercifully, the Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution ought this week to have ended any such possibility. Its new report, 'Nuclear Power and the Environment' sets out in stark detail and excellent prose the terrible dangers of accepting the official line on energy that nuclear power will solve all our future energy problems. It assesses the terrible risks of relying upon plutonium, the stuff of atom bombs, as a fuel. No one who is concerned about political stability in Britain should now be indifferent to the nature of plutonium or the fast-breeder reactors that will use it.

The Government is pondering whether to let the nuclear industry go ahead and build a commercial-sized breeder reactor. Far from 'approving' this idea, as reports over the weekend suggested, the Commission views the idea with grave misgivings, and suggests that it should not be put into practice for as long as possible. How long is 'as long as possible'? The Commission's answer brilliantly justifies Labour's initiative in creating this watchdog six years ago: it is as long as is needed for the widest public debate and the most thorough investigation of other, safer ways of getting energy. The Royal Commission refuses to look upon the whole panoply of nuclear-reactor types as simply technological advances. It judges their social side-effects, and in writing the passages on the breeder itself, the Commission's retiring chairman, Sir Brian Flowers, appears to have mused upon the daring of the Israelis at Entebbe. He has asked himself: if in Uganda, why not in Britain? A site with a fast-breeder will contain the dream material of every future Carlos or group of determined commandos.

But the Royal Commission goes farther than merely point out the risks of nuclear hijack. It appreciates the threat of 'political hijack' – the appalling problem of momentum, the gathering weight and influence of a project as it goes along. In a sense, it does not ask the simple question: should we build one fast breeder? It asks the much more subtle question: if we build one breeder, will we be able to stop building a whole chain of them, even if we don't like what we find? If Labour couldn't cancel Concorde or keep away from Chrysler, how will it be able to cope with pressures from the nuclear and electricity supply industries – and their unions – to keep on with a plutonium system, even though it costs billions and risks our very future?

Sir John Hill of the Atomic Energy Authority, and the nuclear establishment, argue that without a massive expansion of nuclear power we face an 'energy gap', yawning and terrifying to contemplate. The Royal Commission exposes the frailty of this thinking: the way the Department of Energy has passively sat back and waited for the breeder to bail us out of future energy problems, the way alternative energy sources have been starved of research funds. The fact is that, to quite a large extent, the energy gap may be as big as we care to make it. If we invest in energy-conserving technologies, if we adapt our transport system and redesign our insulation standards, if we try to save energy rather then merely sell it, we can buy time to decide about the fast-breeder.

For once, the British skill at procrastination can be a positive virtue. Delay on a breeder decision will allow full public debate. Delay will free resources for other energy systems. Delay will allow some of the nuclear waste problems to be better investigated. Delay may mean the whole nasty 'plutonium economy' need never be created anyway. The Government, for these reasons, must prepare to tell the Atomic Energy Authority to quell its importunate desire for a breeder. (The AEA, in truth, has a disgraceful record in squandering research funds upon its projects, and the row over the SGHW reactor is only the latest fiasco.) The Royal Commission has led the way: there is every argument for taking time and none at all for rushing. Time, for once, is on our side.

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Spotlight on Politics

James Fenton

Take Me To Your Leaders

I went for a walk along the River Conway, and came to a pleasant spot where the stream took a sharp curve, and a pool had been formed, in whose brown depths the heavy salmon lurked. And I lay down on the bank, charmed by the occasional noises of the water, the play of light on the hills, and the warm air. A moment later, I opened my eyes. Something was clearing its throat behind me, and I could see its shadows on the bank. It seemed to have four arms, and a kind of antenna on the top of its head. 'Oh,' I said sleepily, 'you again. I know what you want. You Martians are all the same. But if I take you to my leaders, you must promise me at the end to give me your candid opinion. For I have been much vexed of late, wondering about their respective merits.' The Martian agreed, and we set off.

Leader Number Three was standing on a rostrum, and a large assembly was taking in his words. He was speaking of politics, which he compared to mountaineering: the members of the team were roped together; many were the setbacks they experienced, many the disappointments, but Leader Number Three had had a vision – he saw the clouds rolling back and the peak come into view. And then, just after the peak had come into view, he told his audience that they must go home, and that each of them must try to make a little ripple, and that if they all went on making ripples together, the ripples would join up and turn into a great wave. The audience rose to its feet and applauded for three minutes, but the green figure at my elbow was not impressed. 'Earthling,' he said impatiently, 'you have deceived me. This man is not a leader – he is one of your Scottish clergy. He speaks in riddles. For how shall a man climb a mountain on a wave? He would be dashed to pieces in a moment.'

We found Leader Number Two camped by a billabong, under the shade of a coolabah tree, and as we approached she said: 'Could somebody see whether that billy has boiled yet? I think this jumbuck is just about done, and we don't want to spoil it, do we?' 'Earthling,' said the Martian, 'you are trifling with me. This is not a leader. It's a swagman's Sheila.' 'On the contrary,' I replied, 'this barbecue is the very essence of leadership. The best brains of her party have advised this woman to come to this remote spot and cook a little jumbuck, so that when she returns to her country she may be said to have triumphed.' 'And has she triumphed?' asked the Martian. 'No she has not,' I conceded, 'and she did not exactly triumph last year, on a similar trip to another country. But the triumph is not the important thing. What matters is that people should *say* she has triumphed.' 'And are they saying so?' 'No they are not,' I conceded again, 'and indeed there are several of her party who think that she will never triumph. Indeed there are some who wish she would jump into that rather uninviting billabong. But there are many things she can learn here, from the rugged leaders of this country, which may help her to triumph in the future.' 'What sort of things?' asked the Martian, knitting his three eyebrows into an expression of great perplexity. 'Well, bad language for one,' I said, 'listen to this.'

And they brought a group of prisoners beside the billabong, and held what in this country was called a kangaroo court, and they found the prisoners guilty. Then they turned to Leader Number Two and said: 'What shall we do to the prisoners?' And she replied: 'Listen! Youse drongos, youse may not want to listen to a jam tart, but I'm going to spit out the plum and give it to you straight. Those terrorist bastards fair give me the toms. Them socialist ratbags are so far up their freckles that all you can see is their boots, and Jeez! nobody calls me boots. If we go soft on these murderers, we'll be up shit creek in a barbed wire canoe without a paddle. But if our society is to get a fair suck of the saucestick, you'd have to be a brick short of a load not to give them a knuckle sandwich. I'm fair jack of them. Hang them! Hang them at sparrow-fart! No, better still, hang them now! Then let's get together and crack a few chilled stubbies. After all this toilet talk I'm as dry as a dead dingo's donger.' So they took the prisoners and hanged them from the coolabah tree. It took a long time for the prisoners to die, and the sight of their agonies was most unpleasant to watch. 'Is this what's meant by a triumph?' asked the Martian. 'Well it could be,' I replied: 'you see, in this leader's party there are large numbers of people who look forward to the return of the rope. This year alone they have put down not far short of 30 motions to their conference, calling on Leader Number Two to get cracking with a few executions. And I suppose furthermore that there is something appealing about a cruel woman – Miss Whiplash, that sort of thing.'

'Earthling,' said the Martian, 'I still fear that you are trying to take the micky. For how can government, which is a matter for rational beings, be conducted by irrational monsters? You say that this is Leader Number Two. Take me now to Leader Number One. He had better be good, or I shall have to conclude that you know nothing of the science of leadership, which on our planet is the most valued of skills.' So we went from that country and came to another country, and we searched through wild forests and snowy wastes, and asked the mounted police where Leader Number One might be. But nobody had heard of Leader Number One. We came home, and searched in the Leader's residence, but it too was empty. So we searched the secret places of the palace of government, where cheerless individuals, looking up from their foaming glasses, thought they were having the DTs. But nobody knew where Leader Number One might be. They thought that he must be awaiting orders from a mad flying doctor, who had been travelling around the world, helping its leaders sort out their thoughts. Nobody liked to make a move without the say-so of the doctor, since his wrath had proved costly in the past – almost as costly as his friendship. Nations that had crossed the doctor's path had died to rue the day.

Then we went through a dry brown landscape, littered with the carcase of animals, where emaciated figures with swollen stomachs held forth their hands to beg for food and drink. And the Martian said: 'What is this place called?' and I replied: 'It is called Sussex.' To which the Martian replied in great wrath: 'Earthling, now I know that you have fooled me to the top of my bent (which indeed is very bent). For all the encyclopaedias agree that Sussex is a green and pleasant county, whereas this is a dry and barren waste.'

We came upon a fertile oasis, and found Leader Number One lying in a hammock, sipping lemonade. When he saw us coming, he put on his spectacles, picked up a red box and pretended to be going through his papers. 'O Earthling, Earthling,' cried the Martian, 'has it really come to this? Leader Number Three was a metaphysical preacher, offering to lead his flock to the promised land, with crimpons, pitons and orange nylon rope. Leader Number Two was a bandit's moll, a blood-thirsty, wicked and greedy woman. But what is Leader Number One? Why does he smile so much? Does he not see that the land is laid waste, the springs are dried up, the people are in despair? Your Earthling poet says that one may smile and smile and be a villain. But this man is not a villain. Neither is he virtuous. I look into the depths of his soul, and what do I see? I see a slumbering nothing, a smiling void, a vacuous and monotonous sleep. Wake up!'

And I awoke, and behold, it was all a nightmare. The setting sun still lit the tops of the hills. The evening air was growing chill, and smoke arose from the chimneys of the village, hung for a while in a blue mist over the rooftops, and then disappeared into the forest. I walked home with a heavy heart, and a rather stiff neck.

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Eric Heffer

Conference Predictions

The recent Government changes were so evenly balanced that it can be argued that nothing has really changed. They were neither a lurch to the Right nor to the Left, although the bias was to the Right. The policy pursued by the Wilson Government is undoubtedly being continued by the Callaghan Government. The exception could be Ireland, but it is too early to express a definitive view on this.

It will be interesting and important to see the reception Jim Callaghan gets at the Labour Party conference next week in Blackpool. My guess is that while delegates both from constituency parties and trade unions are very unhappy, and some of their unhappiness will be reflected in their speeches at conference, they will nevertheless give Jim Callaghan and his team a good reception. Labour Party delegates are not fools; unity in the Labour movement is central to maintaining Labour in office, and no one wishes to bring the Government down. Changing its policy, moving it into a more positive socialist direction is one thing; its destruction, benefiting only the Conservative Party is something else.

The task of the Left of the Party is a very difficult one. It must of necessity concentrate on changing policy, yet it must, almost at all cost, sustain the Government. This apparent contradiction between words and deeds is often misunderstood at constituency level, and left-wing MPs are wrongly accused of being paper tigers. When not being so accused, when they take actions such as abstaining on the cuts, they are charged with being Tory agents. One question has to be put: what is the alternative to Jim Callaghan? And the answer is that it is not Tony Benn or Michael Foot leading a virile left-wing government. It is Margaret Thatcher heading a Tory government with policies which would make Ted Heath's government look like a group of dedicated socialists.

Nevertheless, the Government cannot have an easy passage at conference. There are 1,500,000 good reasons why it cannot. Unemployment, despite the wage-related benefits, redundancy payments, social security payments and so forth, is a subject which causes deep emotional spasms in the Labour movement. It is not just that the hungry Thirties are remembered by older Labour supporters, but also because Labour, since 1945, has been the party of full employment, arguing that it is the capitalist system which creates unemployment which only a planned socialised economy can solve in the long run.

The various measures announced by Albert Booth and Denis Healey are recognised for what they are – palliatives which fail to deal with the basic cause of unemployment. It is no good Denis Healey offering to have bets with International Socialist demonstrators. His argument that youth unemployment would more or less be solved by Christmas was heard last year also, and unemployment since then has got worse not better. The truth is that a new economic strategy is required. It is no use Albert Booth or anyone else going to Parliament announcing palliatives when on the previous day the Chancellor had announced cuts in public expenditure which were bound to create more unemployment.

Unemployment and the cuts in public expenditure will surely dominate the conference debates. As I write, I do not know whether the Home Policy Committee's motion against the cuts will be accepted by the whole National Executive of the party and put before conference as an emergency resolution. I trust it will, because what it does is to underline the July NEC reso-

'Or not *to be!'*

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lution which also condemned the cuts. It is interesting to note that 44 constituency parties sent in resolutions between mid-July and mid-August against the expenditure cuts, a clear indication of the unpopularity of the Government's actions. I have no doubt that the Government's policies will be more than adequately defended by Jim Callaghan when he gives the parliamentary report.

In many respects this will be a strange conference. It will have before it the new version of Labour's Programme, a huge document which will probably be discussed section by section at the same time as relevant resolutions from CLPs and trade unions. The NEC members of the Home Policy Committee believe that the programme should be put, amended, to Conference for a vote. This proposal will go to the Standing Orders Committee, if accepted by the NEC as a recommendation. It is important because in 1973 the then party programme was never voted upon, and none of the proposals were included as of right in the 1974 election manifesto. It is that failure which NEC members seek to remedy at this conference. If the programme is carried by a two-thirds majority, then it is bound to be the basis for the next general election manifesto whenever that should come: it is this fact which may be causing some people to try to avoid a vote.

Conference will also have before it a number of other NEC statements. There is one on direct elections to the European Parliament. A document putting the pros and cons will be placed before delegates. The NEC however will remain neutral, but will propose that Britain should not become involved in direct elections: a statement that will cause a great deal of heart-searching. It will, for instance, be argued that in accepting membership of the European Economic Community, the people also accepted direct elections. That, in my view, is not the situation. The issue of direct elections was never put during the referendum campaign: in fact, the Government reserved its position. It is perfectly justifiable to oppose such elections, especially when Britain might be building further tiers of government, all of which will involve further voting of one sort or another. Unless we are careful, the country as a whole will be permanently at the ballot box – in an even worse position than the AUEW. The other NEC statement which has caused a political tremor in the City and the Tory Party is that dealing with banking and insurance. The proposal to take into public ownership the four main banks, as well as the large insurance companies, also has its enemies in the Labour Party. Harold Lever was very quick to point out that the Government had no such plans: and of course he is right. The proposal is not part of the manifesto, but if carried at conference, by the requisite majority, it could be in the next manifesto.

On the other great controversial issue, devolution, it is clear that devolution critics will be routed. The TUC vote has already determined that. Yet, as with the economy, unemployment, the cuts, the doubts, fears and scepticism will remain. Nothing will basically be solved, because the problems Britain has are the result of the end of the Empire, and the failure of the free enterprise system. Labour governments cannot change society overnight, yet unless the Labour movement reaffirms its belief in doing precisely that, it will be bypassed and other less desirable political forces could well take charge. That is why the party's anti-racialist campaign takes on a new significance.

Over the past few years attempts have been made to downgrade the party conference. It has been written off by some Labour politicians as of little consequence. Of late, the same has also been said of the National Executive Committee. I feel sure that again this year every effort will be made (especially by some MPs, not only members of the Government) to suggest that conference is unrepresentative and therefore should be ignored.

Such advice could, of course, be taken by Jim Callaghan – but if Labour is to maintain its unity and win the next election, it is advice that would be best rejected. Jim Callaghan, who has in his time been voted in by the conference as treasurer of the party, is surely too shrewd to ignore the activists. Callaghan, like Clement Attlee before him, knows that conference is too important to ignore.

Ben Pimlott

Portugal's Soldiers in the Wings

'The Portuguese people', Mario Soares remarked recently, 'cannot eat ideology.' He has a point. Now that the revolution is over (or at least resting) the most visible economic legacies of two and a half years of turmoil are a continuing massive deficit, unemployment at more than 12 per cent (seven times as high as at the end of 1974 – mainly because of the influx of half a million refugees) and inflation, at around 30 per cent, no lower than in the last days of fascism. Despite political and social changes that have been very largely for the good, the problem at the moment is whether, or for how long, the poorer sections of the population will have anything to eat at all.

What is clear is that the new Socialist Party (PS) Administration will have painfully little time or money (however far it has the basic inclination) to do much more than consolidate and rationalise. It will try to tidy up and coordinate the agrarian reform; restore confidence to foreign investors, and to the domestic concerns nationalised, at a stroke, by excited young officers one heady night last spring; and convince the Americans, the EEC and especially the sceptical Herr Schmidt, who for broad political reasons have been keeping the Portuguese economy afloat, that the Communist enemy is now firmly at bay. Those, however, who may imagine that the Government will have the resources, let alone the administrative machinery, to do more than scratch the surface of the country's awesome social problems, will be bitterly disappointed. Indeed, the revolution of expectations fostered both by electoral competition and by the Government's programme adopted last month, may yet prove the undoing of the Socialist Party, the Administration and the regime itself.

Soares, for his part, has sounded in his first few weeks of office remarkably like a Portuguese Callaghan, reproving the nation for 'living above its means', and stressing the need for 'necessarily unpopular measures' to curb consumption and increase production. Alas, though comfortingly stern platitudes (and even the recent austerity package) may create an impression that the nursery is now in firm though gentle hands, words alone are unlikely to scare away the bogeyman: the manual trade unions, strongly Communist or revolutionary Left in tendency, can be expected to use strikes and demonstrations to block any measures they regard as anti-working class. Moreover, not only is Soares' minority government (based on barely two fifths of the deputies in the Assembly) dangerously vulnerable to party attack from Left and Right once the summer recess is over – civil and military leaders of all political shades are acutely aware that the present text-book parliamentary democracy, without political prisoners, press controls or overt political corruption, is wholly exceptional in Portuguese history, a strange and rare phenomenon which nobody yet understands.

Hence, as one Lisbon paper put it recently, soldiers are back in fashion. Now that the excitement surrounding the Assembly election (in April), the presidential election (in June) and the formation of the Soares government (in July) has died down, people are beginning to ask once again where power really lies, and to wonder whether the military, having retired with a good grace from the front of the stage, may not now be having second thoughts. Certainly, a traditional military interest in political affairs (which long pre-dates 1974) has been maintained; the present highly politicised generation of officers is watching the first awkward steps of an elected civilian government closely and critically; and everybody knows that the use of military force for political ends, decisive on at least three occasions in the past 30 months, may well appear to offer solutions in some quarters again. It was a sober appreciation of this reality which led soldiers and politicians last winter to decide on a continuing constitutional role for the military Revolutionary Council, and which brought about the otherwise incomprehensible choice of the tight-lipped General Eanes as President of the Republic.

Politically, Eanes was supremely unqualified for the job. Indeed there were good constitutional grounds for not giving it to him: his active participation in the *golpismo*, rightly regarded as the most serious threat to stable, legally based government. For the reality of the military

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confrontation last 25 November, which tipped the revolution decisively away from the extreme Left, was not (as widely portrayed) a left-wing putsch which failed, but a Centrist coup which succeeded, coolly planned and executed by Eanes himself.

In the general relief in the Centre and on the Right, however, such niceties were forgotten. Eanes the hero, politically unknown before November, seemed to provide a guarantee of military stability, while his lack of overt politics appeared as an asset. An Eanes presidency, it was argued, backed by strong reserve powers, would harness the strength and authority of the armed forces to the Constitution, while leaving government to the politicians. Backed by all three major anti-Communist parties, Eanes obtained 62 per cent of the vote.

So far the plan has worked. As President, Eanes appears as he did in the campaign; austere, disciplined, principled, serious, shrewd, inexperienced but ready to learn. He is no politician, ideologue or intellectual – but neither is he a fool, as those around him are beginning to find out. Soares, a rare professional in a still predominantly amateur game, loses no opportunity to praise the new President in public, while remaining the chief instigator of policy; Eanes, on his side, has endeared himself to the government party by drawing attention to a constitutional clause (conveniently forgotten during the election campaign when he depended on right-wing votes) which calls for an 'evolution towards socialism'.

But Eanes is by no means the Socialist Party's creature. He is known to share the view of some of the *meloantunistas* (officers who follow the political line of the *marxisant* ex-Foreign Minister, Melo Antunes) that PS is too much a party of the big-city bourgeoisie, dominated by lawyers and intellectuals who are dangerously out of touch with peasant and proletarian realities. His affected chauvinism (on principle, port, not whisky, is his drink) and unaffected pride in past imperial glories comfort many who find it hard to accept that since the decolonisation Portugal is no longer a large country.

Such manoeuvres are aimed partly at a real or imagined resurgent Right wing within the armed forces. But they should also strengthen the President's hand if, as expected, the government crisis comes this autumn or early next year and the Socialist leadership is forced to consider a coalition with Sá Carneiro's Centre-Right Popular Democrats. It is by no means clear that such an alliance of the soft centre of Portuguese politics could easily be obtained. It would encounter sharp resistance from within the Socialist Party. It would provide the Communists, at present riven with internal dissensions, with a target and a rallying point. More important, within the armed forces there would be strong opposition to a restructured government forced to abandon revolutionary hopes. For Eanes himself, such a crisis might provide a major testing ground, indicating whether the new President is, in the last analysis, 'with the revolutionary process or against it'; and upon that revelation far more than the future of Dr Soares and his beleaguered ministry may yet depend.

Peter Hillmore

Jim Slater's House of Cards

Depending on your point of view, it has been either a good or a bad year for financial scandals. On the global scale there's been the humiliation of a Dutch prince, the arrest of a Japanese Prime Minister, fingers pointed at a West German politician and secret payments made to political parties in Italy.

We've done our part in Britain, so don't write us off yet. We've had an ex-Lord Mayor of London making £5m. personal profit at the expense of shareholders, former cabinet ministers demanding payment in tax free havens, political leaders involved in unscrupulous fringe banks, the Fraud Squad inside the Bank of England. ICI has admitted it is a member of the Lockheed set, and so has British Petroleum. Britannia can certainly waive the rules along with the best of them.

And we have the case of Mr Jim Slater, the local boy made good and the financier turned bad. Of all our financial sagas the Slater, Walker collapse is the most dramatic and the most important. The report by the firm of accountants who investigated Mr Slater's empire after his ignominious resignation last October reveals that the whole empire was run, to misquote Sir Harold Wilson on the other Mr Jim Slater, by a tightly knit group of financially motivated men. Largely for their own ends.

The report is critical of almost every aspect of the running of Mr Slater's empire, and makes it abundantly clear that the group would not have been able to survive without the emergency handout made by the Bank of England. It reveals that directors of the group, or their wives, received huge loans and that the company treated the banking division as an 'in-house' bank, lending over £68m. to 'companies in which Slater, Walker Securities had, or previously had, an interest, or to individuals to finance shareholdings in such companies'.

And, most damning of all, the report shows that in the six heady years from 1970 until the end of 1975, the empire lent money to related companies in a way that, in the opinion of counsel, breached the Companies Act (making SWS liable to the staggering fine of £100). It is this kind of detail that makes it clear that Jim Slater and his cohorts cannot pretend that the collapse of SWS came from a sudden downturn in the economy of the country – it came instead because of the way the company was run and the foundations on which it was built. Six years is a long time in finance.

During these six years, while Mr Slater and his fellow directors were gaily defying the Companies Act, the financial press was not critically peering over his shoulder – they were, for the most part, sitting at his feet. It is important to emphasise and concentrate on the role of the press in Jim Slater's career, not so much to show how wrong journalists can be when they fail to ask the right questions, but because of the dependence that Slater himself put on the newspapers. One of his early jobs was writing a sharetipping column in the *Sunday Telegraph* (under the pseudonym 'Capitalist') and he very quickly learnt the power of an aquiescent press. One of his great achievements was to use many of the City journalists as 'in-house' PR men.

For the popular press, he was something of a hero ever since the *Evening News* organised a lunch for young meteors under 40 (where Slater first met Peter Walker). He was the man who had left school early and built up a financial empire. A mere quote by 'Jim' was enough to depress or raise the price of shares, and even affect the FT index itself.

Even the 'heavy' press frequently responded to Mr Slater's charisma with the kind of silly phrases that normally only appear on the show business pages. To take a pleasing example: in 1973 the normally taciturn Kenneth Fleet, city editor of the *Daily Telegraph* wrote, after SWS had failed to merge with merchant bank Hill Samuel (thanks in part to a notable exception to the journalistic syncophancy, the *Sunday Times*):

> Now a tanned and (ruefully) smiling Jim Slater has raised his head above the edge of the crater. He is ready to leap out to prove to a doubting world that though the face of Slater, Walker may have taken a battering the brain is as fertile and functioning, the limbs lithe and eager and the inner workings not nearly as bad as some X-ray plates have indicated

This kind of rubbish did not necessarily dwindle as the warning signs began to grow that all was not right in the state of SWS. Right up until the end, the Slater mystique put a veneer on his activities. On the day

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that he resigned in ignominy from the company he founded, the *Guardian* came out with the facile comment 'We are all a little richer thanks to Mr Slater', and Patrick Hutber in the *Sunday Telegraph* was still boasting that he had Mr Slater's home telephone number and personal friendship. Looking through the cuttings, it is remarkable how little reporting there was over the SWS dealings in the Far East which directly led to Mr Slater's resignation.

Even with the publication last week of the accountants' report, it was clear that some of the mystique that Mr Slater accumulated was still there. Just after his initial resignation last October, the editor of *The Times Business News* wrote in a percipient article that those people looking for reasons for Jim Slater's collapse 'should turn aside from pretentious references to Icarus . . . in this case the truth is more squalid'. And how did *The Times* headline its editorial last week? 'The Icarus of the City.'

The most pertinent question for the City, and for the Government, to face at the moment is the legacy of the Slater, Walker legend and the clear need for tighter rules in the City. For years the City has insisted that its time-honoured principle of 'my word is my bond' is better than any legislation to control its workings. If the City was populated entirely by gentlemen, then this kind of gentlemanly phrase would suffice. But it manifestly isn't, as the SWS affair so dramatically shows. And what legislation there is, is manifestly insufficient, as the SWS affair also shows – for example, directors are required to disclose to shareholders any material loans they have received from a company – but it is up to the directors themselves to decide what is 'material' (one of the SWS directors for example regarded a £722,000 loan as, well, immaterial).

It is over 30 years since the practice of 'insider dealing' in shares was made illegal in America. But this practice – the clear misuse of privileged information for financial gain – is still not a crime in this country, and the Bank of England committee which recently recommended that it should be made illegal faltered at the final hurdle, and has not recommended the abolition of nominee shareholdings. As part of the New Deal in America, a Securities and Exchange Commission was set up to regulate Wall Street. Although hampered by its own bureaucracy, it still performs immeasurably better than our Stock Exchange Council or Takeover Panel (significantly, the revelations that ICI has paid out over £1.2m. in bribes and questionable payments came in documents it was obliged to file with the SEC). Our own Takeover Panel tries hard but it has no legal powers. There was one occasion, some years back, when the Panel discovered that a public company had not disclosed it had a shareholding in another company of more than 10 per cent, as it was obliged to. The explanation given by the company, and accepted by the Panel, was that it had 'forgot'. The name of the company was Slater, Walker Securities.

Christopher Hitchens

Arafat in Retreat

Raimonda Tawil is a Palestinian journalist based in the unquiet West Bank town of Ramallah. Like almost everybody else in the area, she supports the Palestine Liberation Organisation, but has been used as a 'source' of West Bank information by outlets as diverse as the BBC and Agence France Presse. When I saw her, she was under house arrest with her telephone disconnected. No charge or hearing had materialised, but the regime was not terribly rigorous, and the detention was the least of her worries as a Palestinian.

In the preceding few months Syria had turned and rent its former Palestinian allies in the Lebanon. A few weeks previously the Parliament of Kuwait (a country which shelters thousands of Palestinians) had been disbanded by royal fiat for getting above itself. Meanwhile the Jordanian monarchy was recuperating its West Bank support through the system of patronage which has obtained with Israeli support since 1967. As for Israel proper, it was engaged in a fundamental debate about the Koenig memorandum. Israel Koenig, a supporter of the National Religious Party, is the leading official of the Interior Ministry in the north of the country. His memorandum warned of Arabs 'outbreeding' Jews in Galilee by 1978 and called for determined measures to export Arab talent before it could form a nationalist vanguard. The letters column of any Israeli newspaper testifies to the subliminal chord he has touched.

Some weeks ago, Edward Saab was killed by a sniper's bullet in Beirut. As a leading Arab journalist, and editor of the newspaper *L'Orient/Le Jour*, he had once observed that 'the Palestinians are the public conscience of the Arab world'. It now seems clear that the fate of the Palestinians is the fate of most consciences – elaborate suppression marked by feelings of guilt. So much so that when I asked Raimonda Tawil whether she would prefer Syrian occupation to Israeli rule, she hesitated and said that many West Bankers would prefer to remain with Israel until the issue was decided. Her husband, a former banker, broke in at this point to say that he personally would prefer even a Bedouin government to an Israeli one. But such nationalist absolutes are rare. In the occupied town of Tulkarim, for instance, there used to be a school named after Syrian President Assad. The same town boasts the birthplace of Zuhayr Muhasin, leader of the Syrian stooge version of the PLO, *Al Saiqua* (the thunderbolt). In recent days, not only has the name of the school been changed, but demonstrations have been organised against Syrian and *Saiqua* intervention on the side of the Lebanese Christian right.

It is difficult now to recreate the atmosphere of one year ago, when Arafat was fêted at the United Nations, when traditionalist forces in Beirut were on the run and when King Hussein had formally conceded that the PLO were the only representatives of the occupied territories. This month, the Arab League lamely admitted the PLO to full membership status, but the whole project was redolent of consolation prizes. Just as the Roman arrival in Palestine was prompted by one of two warring princes seeking outside imperial support, so each faction in the Middle East seems to prefer any status quo to the unpredictable and politically sophisticated Palestinian movement of today. Thus, even as the Lebanese Communist Party calls for Syrian withdrawal as a precondition, the Syrian Communist Party forms part of the shaky government which sponsors the invasion. While, in the meantime, the only flourishing Arab Communist Party in the world is operating under Israeli military occupation and drawing its recruits from the sullen graduates of the only remotely open society in the Middle East.

If the Palestinians are the 'public conscience' of the Arab nation, they also bid fair to be its politial detonator. In 1949, Weizmann himself said: 'I am certain that the world will judge the Jewish state by what it will do with the Arabs'. Now that Israel is openly debating the contradictions between democracy and demography within the Jewish state itself, and powerful voices are being raised in favour of a version of apartheid, the Palestinians look up to the Arab League and are not fed.

The idea of *Yihud Hagalil* – the Judaisation of Galilee – has offended much of liberal Israeli opinion by its resemblance to the *numerus clausus* applied to Jews in Eastern Europe in bad days gone by. Yet there is a terrible logic at work. Even Elias Freij, the extreme conservative Arab mayor of Bethlehem, and a Christian to boot, told me that a Rhodesian-type development could occur if land sequestration by Israeli minorities was not curbed. Yet the Gush Emonim (bloc of the faithful) movement, which sponsors such settlement and appeals to the old spirit of the pioneers, says quite simply that God gave them the land and that Arabs are welcome only as guests.

For the Palestinians, then, the immediate prospect is a dreadful one. Massacred in Lebanon as a potential rival on the left of the Syrian Ba'ath, feared and corralled elsewhere for similar reasons, dropped by international circles as a 'loser', their movement is at least temporarily in eclipse and decline. Speaking to PLO leaders in Cyprus (who now have to run an Israeli blockade to the Lebanese ports and the Lebanese Left), and hearing them speak bitterly about Israeli weapons in the hands of Christian neo-fascists, I heard one of them ask: 'We know that Israel fears our demand for a state of our own, and we know why. But do they hate us so much that they would rather have a greater Syria, a Muslim Syria, on their borders?' The question suggests itself to more people than the embattled *fedayeen*.

Jerusalem

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How can you face the music if you don't know the score?

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Jeremy Bugler

Labour's Own Motor Show

On the news of Callaghan's reshuffle, one group of civil servants in particular went noisily rejoicing to the Westminster hostelries. They were the euphoric officials of the highways directorate of the Department of the Environment, old hands from the Ministry of Transport who had suffered nearly seven years' immurement in the Environment empire. Now, by the caprice of Callaghan's need to find a job for Bill Rodgers, the MoT road men have their freedom and their old autonomy back. On almost every level, the thinking that went into this change is superficial: if the DoE was too big, there were better chunks to carve off; if Rodgers had to have a job, there were easier ways of giving him one. The casual way in which Prime Ministers, at the wave of a back of an envelope, cause whole Departments to de- or re-materialise takes the breath away.

Peter Shore's irritation at the manner in which the road men have cut loose from the DoE, and his desire to keep control of major planning decisions about roads, are one sign of the new confusion. The fact is that the Ministry (Department) of Transport has achieved its Second Coming just as the processes for getting a coherent Labour transport policy have reached the most crucial phase. Some 1,100 responses from every manner of organisation had been sent into the DoE in reply to the famous Transport Policy Consultation Document (hereafter 'the document') and Peter Shore was moving towards formulating, probably in a White Paper, the new policy. The re-emergence of the MoT matters because, oddly, the greatest impact the document made has been in a way that few expected: it has highlighted not the arguments of Crosland and the Transport civil servants who drew it up, but the prejudices of the officials.

This one factor, administrative bias, is now a matter of public politics – it is the root of each new Winchester-type shambles at public inquiries into road plans; it is publicly proclaimed by a goaded British Railways (Sir Richard Marsh: 'Some civil servants are so anti-railways that I can only assume that something nasty happened to their mothers in a steam train'). Many people believe today, with some reason, that the Government's officials are road-builders masquerading as civil servants, so apparent was a twist in their thinking in the document. It would be unfair to cast Bill Rodgers, in his new job, as a born-again Ernie Marples, but he may become one unless he proves to be a minister able to appreciate the bias of his officials. And if there is to be any chance of a sound Labour transport strategy emerging from the thickets, Labour will also have to come to terms with its involvement in the motor industry.

Callaghan's reshuffle came just as the omens in transport were a little better: Peter Shore had taken over from Tony Crosland and was well aware of his officials' predilections. In two speeches he went as far as he could to disown the document, and he made changes in the DoE structure to try to integrate the roads and highways people with the planners in the department. Shore seems to have appreciated that the document represented a fatal coming-together of Crosland's obsessive belief that the middle class go round ripping-off every public subsidy that is not nailed down, and the desire of DoE officials to keep up the momentum of their roads programme.

The DoE, from the first, employed vastly more officials on roads than it did on public transport – last year, there were some 1,700 working on highway planning, with some 70 on railways and public transport. The manning reflected the DoE's task-in-hand: highway building. Roads were really the only things the DoE themselves were in charge of; the railways, airways, waterways were run by separate state boards. This disposition will be maintained within the new Department of Transport, and what it means, of course, is that the civil servants have a managerial attitude to roads: like all managers, they want to see their business grow, prosper, expand. And they are chary of rival transport systems.

I felt this most acutely when not very long ago I was talking to a senior civil servant in the DoE's hideous headquarters in Marsham Street. The man turned towards a map upon his wall, a map of the German autobahn system. He looked at the map's thick web of veins and arteries. 'Take note of the Germans,' he said, 'and then think of their growth rate!' *There* is the ideological reason behind the DoE's preference for motor-transport and roads. The DoE and the new Ministry of Transport regard themselves very much as partners in the Government's desire for economic growth and its prodigious investment in the motor industry. In the same way that the Department of Energy throws itself behind the oil men and the nuclear lobby, in the same way that the Ministry of Defence does all it can legally (and more) to sell arms, so the Environment and Transport officials often do their best to assist in the production of vehicles and the surfaces upon which to run them.

This is all very fine, except that it is not the job for which these officials are paid. It has meant that the document was able to say: 'For the time being, the decision to stabilise all rail investment at present levels should form a basic input to railway planning . . . in our present circumstances, we simply cannot afford more than this.' But as the rail pressure group, Transport 2000 points out in its brilliant reply to the document, these constraints apparently do not affect the road programme: 'In England about 2,000 miles of the strategic network of motorways and trunk roads has now been completed. A further 1,100 miles is regarded as of high priority.' The document says this, while casting doubt on the future of some 4,000 miles of railway system in the same pages. A little gall was needed for that.

The new Department of Transport ought to be organised on very different lines from the old MoT or the DoE, just to get round the preponderance of the highways civil servants. A separate state Roads Board has been suggested to take 'roads' out of Whitehall, but that would probably be too powerful a lobby. Much more promising is the approach that what has been wrong so far is the way the administration has been divided between the highways directorate and the transport industries directorate. If the new Department was divided on the basis of a directorate for inter-city transport, a directorate for urban travel and one for rural transport, a great advance would have been achieved. We might reduce duplication and unnecessary competition. (The way British Airways brought in an air shuttle from London to Glasgow as soon as British Rail electrified that line comes to mind.) We might get our civil servants to look at the transport needs of communities, rather than see how particular transport interests should be served.

If, conceivably, Rodgers can persuade his Department of Transport officials to put aside their preconceptions and start afresh, he won't find it difficult to see what a Labour Government should be aiming for in drawing up a transport policy. It's fairly simple to state: a policy that is socially equitable and efficient and makes good use of resources. The document, being in part the *credo* of the DoE officials, goes wrong at the beginning when it assumes that good transport means high mobility. It states that the social objective of transport is to provide a reasonable degree of mobility for all people. Yet mobility, in itself, is pretty pointless: it could simply mean a lot of rushing around or a wearisome driving over long distances. What is needed is not mobility but *accessibility,* as several of the pressure groups point out in their replies to the document. Accessibility is achieved when people can get to their offices, shops, schools or wherever without too much trouble. If they have good access to these places then their transport needs are being met.

The document, however, goes careering after mobility and thus states 'car ownership will increase (and *should* increase, for personal mobility is what people want and those who already have it should not try to pull the ladder up behind them . . .)'. There goes the Crosland obsession again but, actually, ownership of cars *per se* is neither here nor there. What matters is how they're used and whether they give access or not. There are officials in the old DoE and presumably the new MoT, like forecaster Geoffrey Searle, who actually entertain the dream that Britain will one day have the car ownership pattern of the United States with 0.45 cars per person, and a whole changed landscape to go with it. Now, it is just conceivable that this strange future could come upon us, but if it does it will be because we've got caught up with mobility rather than access.

Transport in Britain today is very regressive: the poor travel with difficulty and at

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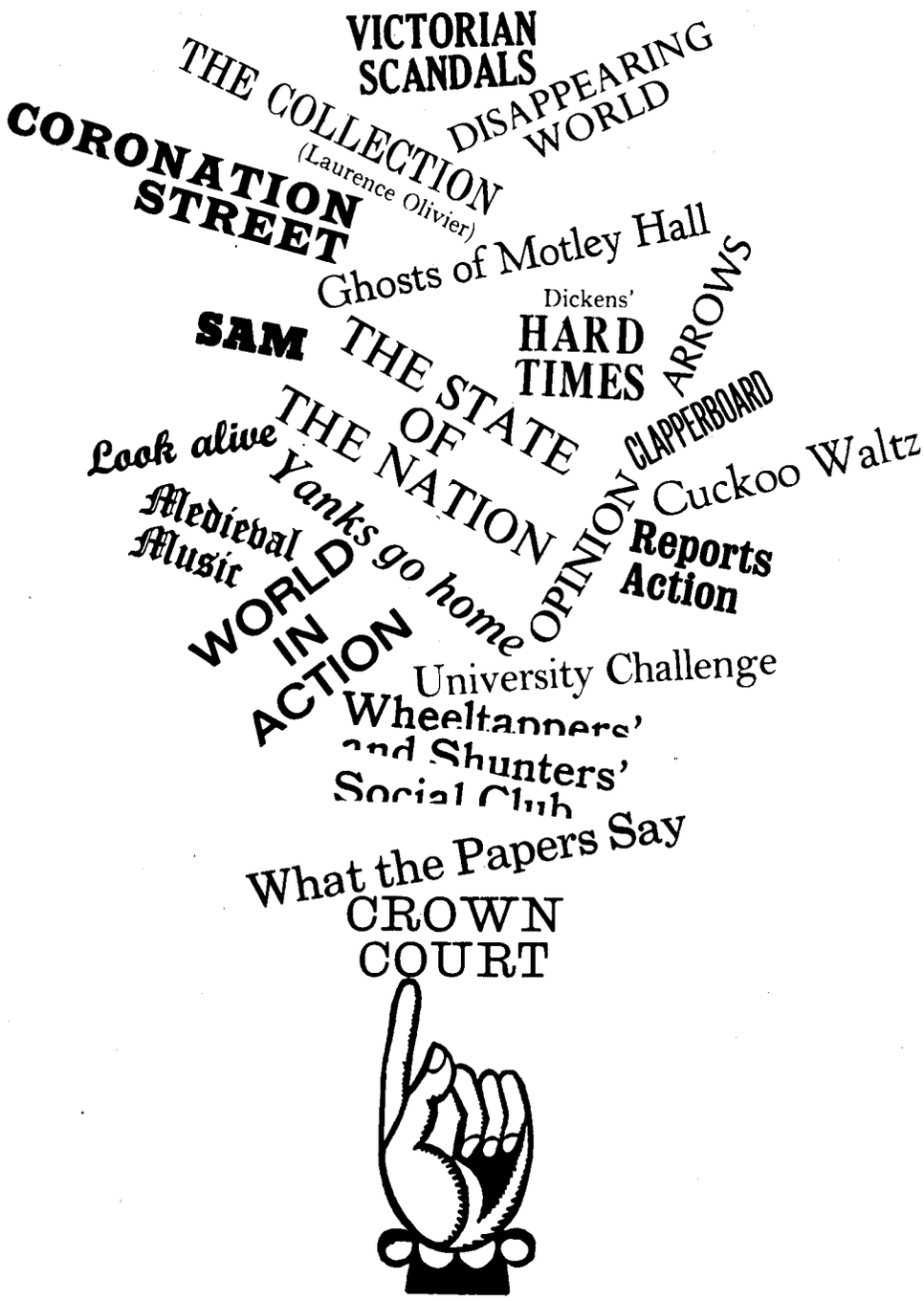
relative expense; the better-off travel with ease and are subsidised as they go. In the cities, perhaps the greatest impediment to good travel today is the clutter of company cars that float into the city, taking up the road space and delaying buses before disappearing into private car parks. Very often, when we speak of the car, we mean the *subsidised* car. Transport 2000's research suggests that at least 2.8 million cars, and probably more, are subsidised, being either company-owned or partly company-financed; their drivers are subsidised by the Treasury. The Government allows companies to claim a capital allowance to offset against tax and also claim on the actual use of the vehicles. In all, Transport 2000 calculate that the Treasury subsidies tot up to £800m., or considerably more than British Rail's deficit.

Now, the document recognised the inequity of paying privileged people to muck up public transport, and so did Denis Healey in his 1976 Budget. Healey's measures to reduce the tax privileges of company car drivers, though, were very much watered down in the face of pressure from British Leyland and the other companies. British Leyland were just launching their low-lying new executive car, the Rover 3500, rolling out of a new Solihull factory that cost £95m., all set to beat back the BMWs. At over £4,000 a carton, the new Rover is obviously not the people's car, except in the sense that they paid for it. The principal buyers will be private companies and, faced with setting back British Leyland's recovery, Healey softened his tax changes for the company car.

Labour's relationship with the car industry is a curious one: fear tinged with respect. Fear because Labour is much more apprehensive about recession in the car industry (and losing the votes of car workers) than in others. Respect because Labour sees the car industry as providing a main lift-off to economic expansion. The panic that Labour got into over the Chrysler deal, ending with Harold Lever's emerging as the patron saint of Detroit, contrasts extraordinarily with the unemployment and redundancy that Labour governments have been able actually to promote in other industries – and still promote today. Whereas some 20,000 car workers' families were threatened and saved, Labour and Conservative governments have deliberately made redundant thousands of steel and railway workers. Railway staff dropped from 446,000 in 1950 to 191,000 in 1973, a decline of 57 per cent. In that period, footplate staff dropped by 70 per cent (from 92,000 workers to 27,000) signalmen by 65 per cent and civil engineering track men by 55 per cent. Obviously, Chrysler and British Railways are not direct parallel cases and there were many different factors in the decisions about redundancies, but the broad view remains that Labour finds the idea of redundancy in the car industry intolerable, even in a foreign-owned firm making a product competing with the state car company. But Labour in government sees redundancy in the public transport industries a positive benefit. So the document once again calls for 'more efficient use of manpower' in the rail services, i.e., redundancies.

Over the years, the way Labour has got



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enmeshed in the car industry may be seen as a strategic error, whatever the circumstances of the time. The document, though, discusses the relationship of the motor industry to the future of transport policy in a very sketchy fashion. Indeed, former DoE second permanent secretary Peter Baldwin, appointed to coordinate transport interests, was recently reported as saying:

> There is a limit to the value of bringing the various transport interests together, because in the last analysis their livelihood depends on it, and you can't expect people to sacrifice everything for chuminess.

So much for coordination! The value of bringing together the carmen and the busmen, the railmen and the airmen, of course, is very high. So far the Government has been trying to keep all apart, not thinking about transport as it pumps investment into the car industry (despite the world overcapacity in car production). Labour actually prefers to improvise: bail out an industry here, adjust your transport policy when the time comes. Proper planning, obviously, means deciding what is the best kind of transport pattern, given the land-use, and then making up its mind about the motor industry. Such a calm, reflective atmosphere doesn't often exist in the tumble of daily politics, but Labour backed down not just at Chrysler but on the company cars too.

Rationally, Labour ought to be urging the motor industry to develop alternative and additional ways of earning a living. Here the Lucas Aerospace workers have shown the way. But, in my view, Labour's reluctance to do this has another cause: deep down, Labour's decision-makers regard public transport as second class. They see the bus as the poor man's communal Cortina. They view the railways as a 19th-century means of travel. They believe that everyone would choose to travel by car, given the chance.

And so they see public transport as mopping up the bits and pieces that cars can't be troubled with: the schoolchildren, the old people, the eccentric non-drivers, and certain classes of commuters. What the document so signally fails to do is to start from the beginning: (1) set out land-use plans which determine how communities will develop and (2) see how much movement can be handled by public transport, which is efficient in energy and sparing of the environment. In other words, Labour's coming White Paper on transport policy should actually set out, as an objective, how public transport use can be increased, marrying in with broad planning decisions.

Up to now, Labour has preferred to accede to market forces and vested interests, even though the consequences, after a moment's thought, seem horrendous. An example: the document recognises that heavy lorries, mangling up road surfaces all over the land, are not paying their full 'resource costs' to the tune of £91m. – the difference between tax paid and the costs imposed. That is something, but the document fights shy of looking at the future if the DoE's forecasts of the numbers of huge lorries come true. It is terrifying. The DoE sees lorries increasing in number from 600,000 in 1975 to 900,000 in 2005. These lorries will be twice the size, will travel farther and be markedly more damaging. We will have, almost inescapably, more terrible accidents like the blowing-up of the small Bedfordshire village of Westoning.

Of course heavy lorries of themselves do not breed, reproducing by mechanical genitalia hidden away beneath their trailer couplings. We get more heavy lorries because of deliberate government policy. Inevitably, lorries have certain advantages over trains below certain distances, but their increase today owes a lot to hidden subsidies. There's evidence that each 'juggernaut' – the 32-ton four-axle lorries – received a £1,710 subsidy last year from the tax-payer. All the road building and maintenance costs chargeable to these vehicles was that much more than the vehicles paid in taxes. A separate calculation for Transport 2000, has each goods vehicle over 1.5 tons getting a £635 subsidy.

In all, it may be that the Government is under-collecting taxes from the road haulage industry to the tune of £400m. On top of that, new EEC regulations come into force next year. The EEC will cut drivers' hours, limit the distances they can drive, and force hauliers to fit tachographs to their vehicles. The Freight Transport Association reckons this EEC bill at some £400m. more. If, then, Labour sees to it that the road haulage industry bears all these costs, a total sum of £800m. must be met. And if that happened, rail freight would often look much more attractive.

Transport is bedevilled by different ways of counting costs; railways have suffered because their costs are easy to judge, while roads and road-based industries disperse or 'externalise' many of their costs. The highways officials in the DoE have taken advantage of this division, and the document is replete with double standards. Concern is expressed at the high expenditure and subsidies in public transport, while the massive spending on roads is taken for granted. In 1975/76, roads took about 60 per cent of spending, public transport support 31 per cent, and nationalised industry investment 9 per cent. (Roads actually took more than they were meant to.) Recently, Peter Shore made a marked change from usual policy by cutting back road spending and preserving railway investment. But when John Gilbert, the former Transport Minister, told the Commons about the effect of the cuts on the road programme, it transpired the roads schemes were not themselves cut, only postponed. Old road schemes, it seems, never die, nor even fade away.

Many people now appreciate that the road programme has been decided primarily by the administrators and not the legislators. Parliament has never given the programme a worthwhile debate, and the DoE's road construction units have been able to build up their networks by piecemeal planning, what *The Times* meant when it said recently: 'Half a motorway creates an almost irresistible case for the other half.' The new Department of Transport may, or may not, feel that the game has changed and that the public now requires a new justification for the road programme. My guess is that, if it feels that nothing really has changed, public confidence in government on this issue will continue to decline and road inquiries will go on being government-sponsored riots.

Maurice Peston

Educating the Educators

The DES has become the government department that everybody loves to hate. All of us are experts on education. (I mean we all went to school, didn't we?) There is a ready audience wishing to be told what goes on in individual schools, and equally anxious to say what ought to go on. Similarly, they would like to know about the internal operations of the DES where senior officials manipulate statistical projections of pupils, teachers, and money, hoping there is a reality to which they correspond. The educational world itself is an uneasy alliance of teachers, local councillors, ministers, and officials of all levels with parents just beginning to get their oar in. At the moment the alliance is in great danger of breaking up with each constituent part defensively blaming the others for what is going wrong. This is, therefore, a good time for the Education Sub-Committee of the Expenditure Committee to report, and an even better one for a new Secretary of State to respond.

Of course the DES will always be subject to special pressures. But there is more to it than that. Education has attracted the attention of social scientists. Economists have seen it as an investment; the accumulation of human capital adding to the productivity of the labour force and bringing faster growth. Sociologists have seen it as a factor in social mobility, and as the key means of integrating all sorts of new or difficult groups into the general social framework.

But there is more still because education has been and remains specially dear to the hearts of Labour Party members. Despite the recent efforts of some ministers to play down the significance of education (and in this they have been joined by a few, but happily not many of the party's intellectuals and advisers), most CLPs would rather talk about education than anything else. Many Labour supporters would argue that the only justification for the Government's economic policies is that their success will enable us to pursue our social goals, notably in education. (We are not going through the present agonies in order to lower direct taxation for the better off or increase differentials in the upper income ranges.) Indeed, if education is not to be seen as a means of social change, it is not apparent what other peaceful instruments we have at our disposal.

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The DES must thus expect to attract a great weight of attention, but especially from those of us on the Left. That this is so is evident from the Select Committee's report, the critical tone and content of which is quite unmistakeable. But what is also clear (and I say this as someone who has had a chance to look long and hard at the Department and is rather devoted to it) is that this interest comes as something of a surprise to officials. It also seems to have surprised Fred Mulley. Thus, my first comment is that the DES was less than helpful in giving evidence, and they should not be aggrieved by the criticisms made of them. Some of the report's criticisms may be thought to be unfair, but MPs had to do a job based on what they were told, i.e. on the answers to their questions, and in this connection it seems to me that ministers and officials could have been much more forthcoming. The committee obviously took the attitude of the Secretary of State and his officials to them as not untypical of their attitude to the world of education as a whole. Thus, they needed no special evidence of the desirability of a more open approach; it was standing there before them.

The most obvious example concerns the so-called PAR (Programme Analysis and Review) Studies. The DES, like other government departments, undertakes detailed investigation of topics which are presently or are thought likely to be of significance for future policy making. I think I am right in saying that, not only are these studies secret, but even their titles are. (The report states that I was the only person to refer voluntarily in evidence to PAR.) One reason is that otherwise expectations would be aroused of possible new measures, or the public might become needlessly worried about the existence of certain problems. Nothing could be more absurd.

Of the PAR studies I have seen, I can recall nothing in them which merits any security classification whatsoever. For the most part they were serious, painstaking (dare I say it, academic) attempts to clarify certain difficult problems and to think of ways of solving them. They show civil servants at their most typical (and, in my view, at their best). Such documents were shown to the OECD experts for the purposes of their investigation of DES planning. But when the committee asked officials if they could examine them, officials said they were unable to agree, and Fred Mulley subsequently supported them. Unless their object was to be unhelpful, or to show backbenchers who was boss, no simple rationalisation comes to mind. Certainly they were mistaken, and I think a new Secretary of State and a new Permanent Secretary would be well advised to rectify matters at the earliest opportunity.

On planning generally, I agree with the Committee's assessment of the weakness of the DES planning machinery. I think, however, they might have been more sympathetic to officials who were reflecting in part at least what ministers of both parties have wanted of them. Obviously, the Department lives too much in the short term, and the Departmental Planning Organisation is not strong enough. It needs to be more fully developed and brought properly into use. The Select Committee says, quite rightly, that it should pay more attention to broader educational objectives, should contain in its full-time staff a representative from Her Majesty's Inspectorate, and needs more specialist staff as well. Nonetheless, we must not exaggerate how easily this might solve certain problems.

To take the most obvious example: the declining birth rate and its consequences ultimately for teacher unemployment. The DES were perfectly able to do their sums and predict that the desired stock of teachers would fall in the late 1970s and 1980s. I myself have stated that their predictions here were more accurate than those of the demographic experts themselves. If we need less teachers in toto, we also need a smaller number of new teachers, and, therefore, fewer places in colleges of education. Thus, we need to plan the closure of some colleges and think of different ways of using others. All of this the DES were able to predict, and in enough time for action to be taken. There was the difficulty of persuading ministers to act quickly and vigorously, but even that was being overcome. The real problem was the economic crisis and the expenditure cuts which eventually left no margin to soften the blow. With more money available pupil/teacher ratios could have been allowed to improve significantly, and, perhaps, there would have been no teacher unemployment. There would still have been a rundown in the supply of new teachers but the process would have been less drastic and painful. Thus, in discussing planning it is important not to devote great effort to a formalism which cannot be applied, and in which ministers will take no interest.

What of the recommendation for a Standing Commission on Education? The Select Committee argue that its membership should not be drawn specifically from educational interest groups, but should include 'trade unionists, employers, and ordinary citizens'. While such people would have a valuable part to play, I cannot see the point of a body not made up considerably of insiders and members of interest groups. Of course, whatever its composition it must not be assumed that it would necessarily concentrate solely on the longer term or do nothing but aid the planning process. Such a forum is bound to be used as a means of airing immediate grievances and concern itself with short term problems. But with a good professional staff it could make a useful contribution to 'systematically reviewing the principal areas of policy and practice which the educational service is now operating'.

My own view is that the Standing Commission is worth setting up, even though I am a little less optimistic about its chances than the Select Committee are. But let us note that they also say 'the DES does not encourage interest groups, or indeed the wider public, to participate in discussion of long range planning and of the overall purposes and shape of the educational service.' This is a most serious allegation, and if it is accepted as true it requires the setting up of a consultative machinery rather different in membership from what is recommended. Certainly, the statement itself deserves a reasoned answer from the DES, and one which is not unduly delayed.

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David Leitch

Let Us Face the Future

The 17.28 express from the Gare de Lyon was carrying, I learned with suitable awe, 'an estimated 45 of Europe's most important futurologists'. Given this lead no very delicate journalistic or human antennae were needed to identify the apostles of tomorrow, bound like me for the Franche-Compté and a conference on 'Future Planning In Europe'. Or at least that seems to be the right translation. Nomenclature is crucial in this milieu. *Prospectivistes*, to use the word preferred by the French, or 'forecasters' as the gruffer Scandinavians put it, like to get things right (a rare experience, when it happens, probably). The word 'futurology' is slightly frowned on, the difference between futurology and *prospectives* is really a subjunctive. One tries to say what will happen. The other is more concerned with what might follow the choice of certain futures.

The practitioners of this arcane science are an ultra-cautious body of men. The matter of the right collective noun for them might stimulate NS competitors. 'Posse' was the journeyman effort I settled for. It gives the right idea of pursuing something that is probably running away at a great rate, and also of their distinctly ad hoc appearance. There seemed an unspoken consensus, one of the few, to do with beards, pipes, and (among the Swedes) plastic sandals. This egalitarian indifference to the artifices of *toilette*, the avoidance of anything that might seem pretentious, reflects the jocular overtones of the trade, at least among laymen. They suffer very likely from the same kind of professional scar tissue as meteorologists.

This forward defensive look is not unconnected with the fact that, like the weathermen, their predictions are often wrong and rarely unanimous. To take some extreme cases. The spectrum extends from the prophecies of Robert Heilbroner, drenched in post-Malthusian gloom and ready to answer 'no' to his own question 'is there hope for man?' via tough warnings from 'The Limits Of Growth' team to a more expansive go-go New World approach from Herman Kahn. He has slightly upset purists by his gift for writing articles with titles like 'Things Are Going Rather Well'. Such breezy simplicity is thought to take the mystery out of the business, not unlike celebrating the Mass in the vernacular. No one could accuse P. Barrett, one of the first speakers, of falling into such a trap. He works for the French Government group of forecasting agencies with the cocky title *Sesame*. His performance was of such scintillating polish that the French, following University College's precedent with Jeremy Bentham's skeleton, might think of putting him in a glass cage to show the world once and for all what a truly copper-bottomed intellectual *de nos jours* really sounds like. Barrett has virtually invented his own language, an impressive miscegenation stemming from a cross between structuralist philosophy, post-Marxist economics and, I suspect anyway, the literary criticism of Roland Barthes. No one who has heard M. Barrett discoursing on, for example, 'bipolarised and multi-polarised scenarios' will ever feel the same about language again.

Which brings us to another delegate, Lord Kennet, a bronzed and bearded sprite of times future, fresh from his labours on 'Europe plus 30'. His lapidary Anglo-Saxon interventions sounded distinctly bald after the Sesame contribution. Consider the following, for example: 'We don't know where we will be because we don't know where we are and we have doubts about where we *were*.' Nothing multi-polarised about his next comment either: 'Statistics are no help because they're always wrong.' To prove his point Kennet explained how only smart work by a Polish commercial attaché in London had detected an error of 15 per cent in British trading figures, which turned out not only wrong for Anglo-Polish trade, but for all other trade as well. 'When this was discovered no one made any headlines about it. It was simply corrected.'

When futurologists want to signify approval of some fellow toiler's efforts in the vineyards of the 21st century, they rattle their knuckles on the conference table. A kind of cautious applause, not quite as uninhibited as clapping, which actually produces a sinister sound. No knuckles rapped for Kennet. There are limits: such a cavalier approach to statistics sounded in this company was like spitting in a church.

Sam Cole of the Science Policy Research Unit at Sussex, young enough to be in the denim-wearing category, yet already a professor, mentioned in passing that a difference of 0.5 per cent in an estimated growth rate, only one input factor among so many, could make a future forecast difference of 30 years or more – a thought which the conference pondered in silence. The discussion of 'political power and future planning' led several speakers to accept that thinking about the future involves spelling out possible aims for the development of the world at a very early stage and, soon after, saying that one is better than, or preferable to, another. Areas like population and environment may appear locked in ineluctable conflict. The *Prospectiviste* will be forced to answer questions about the desirability of high growth, or the inequality of nations, according to his own value scale.

A Dutchman from the Utrecht Centre for Transportation Planning, G. Hupkes, said that forecasters had a long-term responsibility to 'invent the future according to their wishes. We should help people to choose from among the various scenarios, all of which are future possibles.' Alas poor Hupkes, after sportingly trying some special Franche-Compté garlic cheese, disappeared altogether. In the future nothing is certain.

Few of the future experts got to see much of their environment, except the conference hall, even fewer seemed in danger of falling into future traps of the kind that plague utopians. Their approach to the year 2000 and after was animated by as much *brio* as a plumbers congress to consider a vision of leaking taps. It may be their technical obsessions are designed to conceal the fact that they exercise real power. But if a criterion for forecasting is the capacity to imagine what kind of human beings our descendants will be, and how they may *feel*, dare one say, then I fear life may be hard going in 2026. That future train, incidentally, arrived at its destination just 13 minutes late.

Caroline Seebohm

Mind-Blower

Psychosurgery – defined as a brain operation that destroys an area of the brain for some psychiatric benefit – is done half as many times again in England as in the US, I learned with some surprise at the annual American Psychological Association Convention, held in Washington at the beginning of September. That, however, was the least of my worries. I also found out that men interrupt women 23 times as often as women interrupt men; that if you're about to be raped, your chances of escaping are 75 per cent higher if you cry out and try to run away than if you remain passive; that women's breasts can be enlarged by hypnosis; that nobody likes the idea of car-pooling; that women have better instant recall than men; that androgyny is the trend of the Seventies.

Over 700 paper sessions, symposia and lectures were presented in five days to over 15,000 psychologists gathering in three enormous convention hotels, the Washington Hilton, the Shoreham Americana, and the Sheraton Park. Two shuttle buses were on constant watch to take participants to their various meeting places. Thousands of paper cups and jugs of water were on hand as people rushed about, clutching the blue 355-page convention programme book, in desperate search for the Forum Room, the Jefferson Room East, the Marshall Room, or the Men's Room. Also staying at the Sheraton Park was Italy's La Scala Opera Company, preparing for a two week stint at the Kennedy Center. Squashed between arrays of posters about Mental Health, the Association of Gay Psychologists, and Psychologists for Carter, was a scruffy blackboard announcing, in Italian, rehearsal schedules for *Macbeth* and *La Bohème*, plus information about tours of the Casa Bianca and the Museo Smithsonian. Groups of nervous Italians huddled round the board, evidently afraid of being whisked off and laid out on a couch by analysis-happy conventioneers.

Downstairs in the Exhibit Hall of the Washington Hilton, publishers displayed their wares, hoping professors would teach courses using their textbooks; students

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browsed through the latest therapeutic manuals; and most of us spent at least half an hour every day glued to the pornographic film booths, one of which had ten (sic) TV screens showing different hard core sex movies, the other of which had only two TVs but also a large film screen, showing frank acts between males and females, males and males, females and females, and everyone together.

The justification for such entertainment was that these films were examples of the last sex therapy. 'Most Patient Counselling Films depict a couple engaged in an accepted sexual homework exercise,' explained a brochure. The psychologists watched the sexual homework exercises in an atmosphere of unrelieved gloom. If you thought sex therapy was *fun*, forget it. The typical successful sexual homework therapist has white hair with long sideburns, a craggy face expressing both wisdom and lasciviousness (an art derived from much practice with patients), and a gentle voice. He is usually photographed wearing a necklace with his leisure suit, and he writes books such as *How to Live with Another Person*, *Dare to be You*, *The Art of Hanging Loose in an Uptight World*, and *When I say No I Feel Guilty*, titles which are found in the libraries of thousands of Americans who have come to be known as 'therapy junkies,' and which make fortunes for the authors.

One day after a particular brain-damaging session ('Using Personality Correlates to Validate a Self-Esteem Measure') I fell into conversation in the coffee shop with a black psychologist, who expressed puzzlement that I didn't leave right away and go back to England. It turned out he was presenting a paper called 'An Interview with the Incredible 200-Year-Old Educational Psychologist!' When I asked what that meant, he said he was going to stay loose on that one, but 'I'm going to present a protest-implicit, rather than explicit,' he added with a faint smile. That did not surprise me. In America, black psychologists, like women psychologists tend to dwell in the realm of protest. 'The White Male Club' and 'Antecedents of Female Powerlessness' were two typical titles of many papers on these subjects delivered at this convention.

I drew two conclusions from my five-day experience with research-and-shrinkdom. One is that most psychological studies seem to be based on a sample of college students (the convenient, close-at-hand choice for researchers) or almost exclusively from the middle classes. I need hardly elaborate on the implications of this fact in terms of validating their research into human behaviour. My second conclusion confirmed what many people probably already suspect, that is, that the 'science' of psychology as practised in America is in many cases simply putting into fancy, tabulated formulae things that any normal person knows already – such as that people who take naps take them either because they like sleeping during the day or because they are tired ('Sleep Patterns in Replacement and Appetitive Nappers'). As one rather endearing lady psychologist murmured after presenting her paper (which reported that people remember things more easily in than out of sequence), 'It's so obvious, isn't it?'

Psychopath

The Case of Patrick Mackay

TIM CLARK and JOHN PENYCATE

In 1968 Patrick Mackay was diagnosed a 'cold psychopathic killer' and committed indefinitely to a mental hospital; in 1974, with a string of muggings and killings behind him, he was on trial for murder. This is a disturbing book by the BBC *Panorama* team who originally investigated Mackay's case. It looks at the many important questions raised by the case and gives a detailed account of Mackay's detorioration from his turbulent childhood through to his murder of his friend Father Anthony Crean, illustrated with his own words. An insight into the mind of a mass killer. *Illustrated* £3.95

Bad News

GLASGOW UNIVERSITY MEDIA GROUP:

Peter Beharrell, Howard Davis, John Eldridge, John Hewitt, Jean Oddie, Greg Philo, Paul Walton, Brian Winston

Foreword by Professor Richard Hoggart

This controversial, timely study, based on an exhaustive monitoring of all television news broadcasts over six months, January-June 1975, explodes the illusion that television news in Britain is more objective, more trustworthy, more neutral than press reporting. The authors took as their special subject industrial news broadcasts: all items concerned with the TUC, all strikes and other forms of industrial action, and business and economic affairs. By showing how TV news 'favours' certain individuals and institutions by giving them more time and status, their findings deny the neutrality of the news, and direct light on the picture of industrial society that TV news constructs. £5.95

Freedom and the Welfare State

BILL JORDAN

In his two previous books, *Paupers* and *Poor Parents*, Bill Jordan provided a stimulating critique of the welfare state in Britain. In this wide-ranging analysis of the relationship between freedom and welfare he considers philosophical, literary and political expressions of the ideals of liberty and relates them to present-day issues in social policy and the social services. £4.50

Zen in the Art of Helping

DAVID BRANDON

David Brandon, an experienced social worker and by faith a Zen Buddhist, contends that much of what passes for helping others is in reality a kind of egotism which succeeds only in hindering them. He explores the major areas where the helping process can be illuminated by looking through a Zen perspective, with illustration from his own unorthodox way of doing social work. £3.50, *paper* £1.75

The Glass Cottage

A Nautical Romance

PETER REDGROVE with PENELOPE SHUTTLE

This is the second novel by co-authors Peter Redgrove and Penelope Shuttle: 'a combined writing force', as *The Times* described them, 'who also greatly enrich fiction'. They have written an unusual mystery story that takes the reader into strange by-ways of emotion, and introduces him to many odd and memorable characters: the mad professor, the perverted ship's doctor, the poet, the actor, the lover, the freckled psychologist, the ship's spirit, the murdered girl and, not least, the great liner itself, the *S.S. Messenger.* £3.50

NB Donald Davies' *Articulate Energy* (£3.95), first published in 1955, was widely recommended as an important and original analysis of the way in which syntax functions positively as a poetic element within poetry itself. Donald Davie has added a considerable postscript, reviewing what he did in the original edition.

Routledge & Kegan Paul

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London Diary

☐ The British public has been led to believe for years that Sweden, though no doubt an estimable country, is not an exciting one – at least in political terms. Its actual election campaign thus got pretty cursory attention in British newspapers – until, that is, the results came in this week. At that moment Jimmy Carter himself could hardly have complained of the coverage. Of course the ending of 44 years of rule by one party makes a better story than its mere continuation; but an unattractive element of 'gloating' still seemed to creep into much of the reporting. Sweden's reputation as a 'laboratory of socialism' has always been something of a mystery: even in 44 years the Social Democrats never managed to take more than 6 per cent of the economy into public ownership. But what, of course, they did provide was excellent economic management (even by capitalist standards) combined with a welfare state that has no rival anywhere. The last, inevitably, is what Conservatives have always resented, but I don't see Sweden's new government daring to dismantle it. Even Mr Bohman, Sweden's own Conservative leader, was eager to assure me last month that it represented the united achievement of *all* political parties; and when I put it to him that he was perhaps more 'timid' than some of his international confrères, he simply replied with a smile 'Let us say more moderate'. Perhaps someone should have a word with Mrs Thatcher before she rushes in to throw her bonnet over a supposed 'freedom' windmill.

☐ The chatter in Stockholm when I was there was that if Olof Palme did lose the election, he would overnight become a leading candidate to succeed the unfortunate Dr Waldheim as Secretary-General of the United Nations. He's certainly about the only European who could hope to command Third World support – but since two Secretaries-General out of four have already come from Scandinavia it's difficult to see that as anything more than a long odds chance. The other job being canvassed for Mr Palme was a little less grand. Given that Mr Fälldin, the new Prime Minister, can't speak English – something that most Swedes under 30 do rather well – the pranksters were predicting that Mr Palme (who speaks about six languages, including English, fluently) could always continue to exercise a very personal influence on events by consenting to act as Mr Fälldin's interpreter.

☐ Building Societies are doubtless breathing a sigh of relief that they avoided being included in the Labour Party NEC's plans to nationalise the chief banking and insurance houses. However, the decision to give Peter Shore responsibility for urban affairs may yet make them reach for their tranquillisers. Shore has already made clear his intention to stop Britain's inner city areas falling in to the same derelict state as North American cities, a process of decline that can be extraordinarily fast. The Town and Country Planning Association, with jobs and planning theories to protect, claim that the wide open spaces, quite simply, make the quality of life in Harlow and other new towns more attractive than in urban centres. This is sufficient to explain the exodus. But that is half the story. As Shelter recently stressed, there are many empty private houses in Britain's cities – over 35,000 for more than six months in London alone. Quite clearly there is also a demand for them. But many people are being driven out of the older urban areas, unable either to get mortgages or a loan from local councils suffering a £146m. cut in their lending funds. Healey piously hopes that building societies will 'fill the gap'. In reality, these societies, concerned for their investors' funds, have always been unwilling to lend on 'unsafe' old properties for fear of local authority demolition. Now, they have actually taken to marking off entire inner areas as containing only unacceptable property ineligible for mortgage grants, thereby hastening the destruction of whole areas and fulfilling their own fears. This practice, called 'red lining', not only makes a nonsense of Shore's plans; it also hits hardest those who need help most in the lower end of the housing market. If this unacknowledged policy continues, Transport House could do worse than start putting red lines around building societies themselves.

☐ Given that it's ITV's self-congratulation week, I was slightly puzzled by the curt way in which David Steel was treated by the network last Saturday. I watched his speech from Llandudno on the commercial channel and, just as we got to 12.28 p.m., it began to get exciting; the Young Liberals had promised a silent protest if the dread word 'coalition' was as much as mentioned – and that, to the irritation of radio producers, was broadly what they gave us. Birnam Wood advancing on Dunsinane made, however, splendid television, except that it was only visible by courtesy of the BBC. On ITV they chose precisely that moment to leave Llandudno and proceeded to beguile us with ads for varnish, marmalade and deodorant.

☐ Now that Peter Parker is managing to get himself pictured sharing jokes with railway workers as he sets out on fact-finding tours, I consider the honeymoon period over. Two questions might be asked. One, when is he going to act on the NUR recommendation for workers on BR's hitherto very grey and undistinguished board? Next, if the British Rail wiseacres are right and lower fares would not bring more customers back to the emaciated railway system, why is no station complete without about six different advertisements for cheap, reduced fare deals? Either the schemes are a waste of money or there is a relationship between how much people travel and how much it costs. Recently, four friends of mine travelling to Manchester worked out that for the cost of the return fare they could have pooled their dough and hired a chauffeur-driven Rolls for the day. At Great Turnstile we spurn ostentation, but it is going to cost us £40 just to have two people transported to Blackpool and back next week.

☐ For all the rumours that Roy Hattersley was disappointed with his new 'female' job overseeing prices, there was no sign of it last weekend in Birmingham. He was as beaming and energetic as ever at the National Consumers' Council congress, playing for all it was worth the short-lived but nonetheless attractive role of the new boy ('I know *much* less than you about everything', etc.) And he did make a valiant attempt to destroy the mystique which the consumer movement – and above all its Grandfather, Michael Young – sedulously foster. It is to the effect that the 'movement' is not 'political'; and this is somehow equated with virtue. But the myth did not prevent Michael Young from attacking the unions in general, or indeed Roy Hattersley from saying that, given the choice, he would sooner be off the platform and down in the audience alongside the Child Poverty Action Group. Even the colours of the consumers' day at Aston University were designed to be noncommittal: they ranged from the bright orange of the delegates' badges to the paler orange of the lunchtime squash. It took a paid-up Conservative from the 'apolitical' delegates to say out loud that he felt he'd wandered mistakenly into a Liberal party meeting.

☐ This week Assiac bids farewell as our chess columnist after a remarkable 27 years' run. Assiac, of course, is – and always has been – Heinrich Fraenkel who celebrates his 79th birthday next week and whose own NS career goes back even further than the chess column. Heinrich, in fact, started off as Kingsley Martin's German expert (an interest he has fully maintained in his books, written with Roger Manvell, on Hitler's Germany); he is also something of a cinema 'buff' – having been in his time (which, believe it or not, was before the Reichstag fire) a screen-writer both in Hollywood and Berlin. But chess has for some years been his first love, and I know no one is more gratified than he is that a chess column is to continue in the NS – from next week, under the guidance of Tony Miles, Britain's only, and the world's youngest, Grandmaster.

Crucifer

This England

Prizes: £1.50 book token for first entry, £1 tokens for others printed. Paste entries on a postcard.

☐ When former Shepton Mallet carnival princess Miss Clare Hilliar appeared locally on a £1.26 shop-lifting charge, none of the half dozen local magistrates would hear the case on grounds that they felt they knew her too well to serve justice. – *West Somerset Free Press* (R. M. Pointon)

☐ Lessons in exorcism are to be given at evening classes at Nottingham People's College this winter as part of a liberal studies programme on modern spirituality. – *The Times* (H. D. Lyon)

☐ The Mayor, Cllr Arthur Alcock, said it was unfortunate that the Queen's Silver Jubilee coincided with the bi-centenary celebrations in January of Richmond Bridge. – *Richmond & Twickenham Times* (E. M. O'Dea)

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Denis Pitts

No Business Like . . .

No, they said, no kidding, it's the best show-biz party of the year, you know, with all the people you should know if you're going into movies and anyway you ought to meet Cy, he's something else, head of publicity at the biggest studios in Hollywood for 50 years, he knows them all, you know, Greg and Frank and Steve, they'll all be there, no one misses Cy's parties.

It was steamy, sub-tropical summer in Manhattan and, like most of the population of the island, I had taken enough rain for one day and I was happy to flop on the convertible settee and watch the Cronkite show and the movies and maybe slip out later for a liverwurst sandwich and cold beer. They called back, however, more insistent than ever, and I went. It was still raining and there were no cabs, except those who aimed at speed for the flooded gutters, coating my best beige trousers with mud.

The party was due to start at eight, they had said, and it would be swinging by ten. I rang the door bell at nine. There was no sound of any life from the apartment but the door was open and I looked in.

It was a sad, one-room-and-kitchenette affair, wallpaper peeling and reeking of must and tom cats. The bed was unmade and there was a half-eaten meal on the table. I was just about to leave when a man came out of the shower-room. He was a very small man and very old. His face was severely wrinkled and his eyebrows sagged over small and beady and hostile eyes. He wore a faded Panama hat, the brim of which was turned down at both ends; and he wore a black apron with I AM A SEXY SENIOR CITIZEN emblazoned on it in red lettering. He wore nothing else. His voice was squeaky and irritable.

'Who the hell are you?' he said.

I told him the name of the people who had invited me. 'Never heard of them,' he said. 'Told everyone ten o'clock, no earlier. Shit, look at this mess. Give me a hand clearing it up, will ya?'

A cockroach ran across the carpet and a small black kitten leapt from an armchair and caught it. 'Good girl, Zoë,' the man said. 'Judy Garland gave me that cat's grandfather. Ever met Judy? She used to come up here all the time, just to cry. Christ, what a mess this place is in.'

A middle-aged woman came in carrying a plastic bucket filled with ice cubes. She was tall and her hair was crow-black and brilliant with lacquer. There was something strangely grotesque about her face. One eye was much larger than the other, it seemed. He said it. 'Jesus, Carol, now what's he done to your face? The whole thing sags to starboard.'

She gave him a huge wet kiss and smacked his little wrinkled bottom loudly. 'Bastard calls himself a plastic surgeon,' she said. 'I've got a butcher on Second Avenue who could do better with a cleaver.'

'Sue him,' he said.

'You bet I'm sueing,' she said. 'A million bucks. Hello, I'm from upstairs. Who are you? Cy, for mercy's sake go and put some drawers on. It'll catch pneumonia and fall off. This whole damn room stinks. Honey, go into the bathroom and find the aerosol fresh-air spray. Sorry about my face. It gets worse when I'm tired. Been to any of Cy's parties before? They're great. Are you in the business? It's all show-biz,' she said. 'You know, the very best people from Hollywood. If they are out of town here in New York, they always come to Cy's.'

She started to make the bed. 'What do you do?' I asked her.

'I run a little dress-making outfit,' she said. 'I guess I'm the only one here who isn't in the business.'

He came from behind a screen in a white shirt and long tropical shorts. He was still wearing the panama. 'I called Fred McMurray,' he said. 'He's in town but he can't make it. Bill Holden knows about the party. He'll be along later, I guess. And I left a message for Frank, he's in from Vegas tonight.'

'Put your apron back on, darling,' she said. 'It's cute.'

'Present from Rosalind Russell,' he said. 'She's not coming either.'

The woman opened a box of potato chips and poured them into a glass bowl. She cleaned several ashtrays in the sink and poured nuts into them. He poured half a bottle of vodka into a cocktail shaker and handed it to me. 'You shake,' he said. 'It gives me palpitations. Marlon Brando gave me that cocktail shaker. Real cut glass and silver.'

'Cy worked with the greatest stars in the world,' the woman said. 'And the big name directors.'

'I made them stars,' he said. 'Made them. That's why they all come to my parties. I made them. Bogie and Errol Flynn and Chuck Laughton and Deanna Durbin, you know, stars and the big-name directors.'

The woman from upstairs put out paper napkins. The kitten chewed contentedly on the cockroach. I stayed on for a while and drank two martinis and ate peanuts and watched the dressmaker roll a stack of reefers, which she put in an ivory cigarette box.

'John Huston gave me that box,' said the old man. 'Brought it all the way from the Congo just for me. Great guy, John.'

Guests started to arrive. There were two negligence lawyers, a fat woman from Chicago with a frighteningly thin man whom she called 'lover boy'. Everybody felt sorry for Carol and they talked for a solid hour about plastic surgery. One of the lawyer's wives opened her blouse to show the scars of her latest breast uplift.

Frank and Greg and Fred and Steve did not appear; nor did the people who had demanded my presence. I left when a drunken computer man crashed a wine bottle on the table and called everybody 'sons of bitches'.

On the following morning my friends called and said: 'Hey, wasn't that just one hell of a party?'

Roger Woddis

Happy Days

Sing ho! for the laughing British,
Thank God for this happy breed,
Whose mood is distinctly skittish
In spite of the life we lead.
While Eyeties are sick with sorrow,
And Indians, racked with doubt,
Go in dread of a dark tomorrow,
The British are falling about.

Sing ho! in a joyful chorus,
Rejoice in this sceptred isle;
Whatever the road before us,
We manage to raise a smile.
We banish bad news with sniggers,
We chuckle at high finance,
And hearing the workless figures
We laugh till we split our pants.

Sing ho! for our odd behaviour,
Sing ho! for this blessed plot,
Though even in Scandinavia
They think we're a funny lot.
Our laughter as summer passes
Grows louder as winter nears,
While Nanny looks over her glasses
And says it will end in tears.

MUSSOLINI'S ROMAN EMPIRE

Denis Mack Smith

Denis Mack Smith is the foremost English historian on modern Italy. His new book, the first in a projected two volume comprehensive history of Italian fascism, deals with Mussolini's foreign policy and the relations of fascist Italy with the rest of the world from the start of the fascist period to the fall of Italy in 1943.

Despite the recent proliferation of brief introductions and scholarly books on special aspects, there has not hitherto been available a broad and recommendable general account of the period, of manageable proportions. This vigorous and incisive book now fills that gap. It is likely to become the standard work on the subject for historian and general reader alike.

£7.50 net Hardback

Longman

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First Person

Arthur Marshall

On Average

Our carefree government has, I observe, been at it again, squandering your and my hard-earned and tax- and VAT-extracted cash. A 'theatre party' has been given (best stalls, I bet, and a box of chocs the size of I don't know what) followed by a simple meal at a snacketeria to which I, the 'man in the street' if ever there was one, don't often get invited and called The Dorchester ('Now, which of you are roast grouse?'). And for whom was this humdrum little outing arranged? Why, 'the Permanent Representatives of the EEC'. If they are permanent and can't escape or be changed, whatever can be the point of buttering them so lavishly up? And is there not in this some risk of the modish 'crime' of soft-soaping (and who can say where, in social life, bribery begins or ends?) Who dares to arrange these expensive treats in the present stony-broke times? The Representatives themselves, chugging happily homeward in, who can doubt, ministerial cars, must now think us even barmier than they did already.

And if they read our newspapers, as I suppose they do, they will find us dottier yet. Item after item convinces me that we are all mad. The Public Record Office, containing matter essential to a vast number and hitherto conveniently situated in Chancery Lane, is, I see, going to go into hiding in Kew. Will it, for good measure, be camouflaged? This, after 15 years, is what they're up to with those vast duck-egg blue domes of the Fylingdales early warning station. This, of course, will hoodwink the Russians entirely when they become either olive green or, and it's not decided yet, a tasteful shade of grey. Meanwhile, a Hammersmith bank robber arrives to rob in a chauffeur-driven car ('Home, James'), a forest near Nazareth gets itself named after Sir Harold Wilson (and whatever can the trees be? Weeping willows? Sepulchral yews?) and a Northamptonshire sewage works decides to scent the countryside for miles around with heady pine and lemon fragrances. Furthermore, council house tenants, already paying outrageous rents, are not being allowed to get on with their lives in their own normal way. In North Dorset they can't do as they like in their baths. In Oswestry, fleas are out, in Plymouth you aren't welcome to flush empty milk bottles down the lavatory (just what they'd all been hoping to do), while in Exeter neither cats nor dogs are permitted to mate 'without the consent of the housing-officer'. ('Hullo, hullo. Is that Mr Strudwick? I'm afraid Pussy's had a little accident.') I'd like to see bossy Mr Strudwick trying to explain these restrictive measures at Appleton near Exeter to our spirited little West Highland terrier, Jamie: yap, yap, and a sharp nip in the ankle.

And while we're, temporarily, on oddities, whatever happened about the rummest news item in years, namely that some splendidly new and gleaming tube trains which had been especially designed and built to bring a message of hope and cheer and comfort to those travelling on the Inner Circle were then, bless me, found to be too big to get into the tubes ('Oops! My tape-measure must have slipped!'). So then they had, expensive work, to lower the tracks to squeeze the jumbos in. Whose fault was it? Was anybody, and do please excuse the verb, sacked?

I pass my life now in a state of total bewilderment. Even my ordinary pleasures conceal mysteries. Who could possibly disagree that the happiest and merriest telly moment of the week is *Come Dancing*? A fresh and nimble couple twirl themselves lissomely on to the floor, all set for a lively military two-step. 'June's dress', somebody announces, 'is made out of three miles of pink nylon net and she is a costings clerk. Ron is an average-adjuster and they have been engaged for 8½ years. They hope to marry in 1979.' Instant bafflement. We know of what June's evenings consist but what can June's arduous days, costing away like anything, involve? And what, indeed, of Ron, now prancing and gliding down the ballroom floor, white-gloved hand on hip? What possible faith can one have in an average that, day by day, requires adjusting? I referred to myself as the 'man in the street' but on reflection I fear that this is a woefully false claim and so please forget it. Whenever newspapers declare, as they quite frequently do, what the average man is up to, I turn my face to the wall. He, it appears, drinks 3¼ pints of beer a week (I don't care for beer). He marries at 22 and has 1¼ children (and here I am, still looking keenly about for Miss Right). The other day we were told somewhere the flabbergasting news that the average man's wardrobe was valued at £700 and contained six pairs of jeans. *My* wardrobe at 'Myrtle-bank' has the ignominious and unusual record of containing items that have been refused, if politely, for parish jumble sales.

When it comes to the yearly average in food and kitchen procedures and meals, I find that I do play my humble part. When dinner comes round, I shall refuse the first course (the average man eats 9½ soused herrings a year, and is welcome to them) but I am all ready for the main dish and a liberal serving of my 184 pounds of meat, two of my 967 potatoes, a sprout or two, and a dollop of my 18 quarts of gravy. And for pudding, part of my 21 bags of suet, and jam from one of my 37 pots. I then wash up and break 4¾ plates and use up three of my 532 hiccoughs.

We can now make up our own sad yearly averages before the newspapers arrive at the same figures. Each of us can expect to find 3½ postal items, usually of importance, 'missing'. If we travel by air we can count on being hi-jacked 5¼ times. We shall all be burgled 2⅔ times and mugged 1½. And if we happen to be the wives of foreign embassy officials and we are caught shoplifting in 'a famous store' in Oxford Street, the police will search us and find on us an average of £834.

Letters to the Editor

Union Debate

Sir, My attention has been drawn to Paul Johnson's article in the NEW STATESMAN (3 September). This quotes extensively from my study of the closed shop. The impression given is so misleading and innaccurate that I feel I must ask you to allow me to correct some of the more obvious errors. In the first place I never suggested that union leaders were 'ashamed' of the term 'closed shop'. My point was that in an effort to undertake a little 'elementary public relations' they often fell back on euphemisms when discussing the subject with the ignorant. They still do, and given the way people like Paul Johnson still react this is not surprising.

Second, I did not imply that there was a time 'not long ago when even the most enthusiastic supporters of trade unionism' would have opposed the closed shop. On the contrary, large parts of the study were devoted to showing that the closed shop was a long established and perfectly understandable industrial objective, pursued by most trade unions and almost all professional associations. Mr Johnson must have ransacked the book to find quotes from men like George Howell and Dr Barou in an attempt to prove the reverse. Even when he gets their names right he misrepresents and exaggerates their position. He also never quotes from anybody who disagrees with them.

Third, I made it quite clear that countries like the USA who have tried to outlaw the closed shop have had very little success. On the whole their efforts have led to under-cover methods of enforcement that have not helped individual workers. This was what happened when the 1971 Act tried to outlaw the practice, as even Mr Johnson should know by now. The fact is that the closed shop continues to exist in virtually all the countries where it has been solemnly declared to be against the constitution, or contrary to statute law. Of course the law can help to civilise its impact on individuals, but to do this effectively it must recognise its existence and seek to regulate its problem. In this respect the law in Britain is much better than it was – though it is by no means perfect. All these matters are discussed in detail in the study, but Mr Johnson does not appear to be aware of any of them.

Fourth, and most important of all, I made it quite clear that the closed shop has been enforceable by statute law since at least 1906. (Some would say since 1876, but I have no wish to overstate the case.) It has also been found to be compatible with common law principles since at least 1924. (Indeed you could argue since 1901, but I have no wish to be

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controversial.) It is therefore nonsensical to suggest that it goes against 'the spirit of English jurisprudence' – although this is not to deny that some judges, in some closed shop cases have decided against trade unions. In general terms, however, the courts accept the justifiability of collective action in defence of trading interests – including action to enforce union membership as a condition of employment. (Indeed, they could hardly do otherwise since the legal profession itself is based on a series of interlocking closed shops – as at least one judge remarked during a notable closed shop case cited in my study.)

The fact is that if Mr Johnson had read the book, instead of merely sifting through the index for convenient quotations, he could not have sustained the central thrust of his argument – i.e. that the 1974/6 legislation has made a significant difference to the pre-1971 legal position. He would have realised that workers now have more legal protection than they had in 1970. He would know that it is literal nonsense to speak of the 'compulsory enforcement' of the closed shop by parliamentary statute. (There is no law that 'compels' workers to join unions. What the law does is make compulsion by employers and workers non-actionable. But this was the position before 1971.)

Above all, perhaps, Mr Johnson might have understood that the closed shop is not just a device which trades union leaders use to further their own interests. It is often essential if workers are to be able to combine effectively to match the natural power of employers in the labour market – a fact that was always appreciated by the best kind of classical economist, such as Adam Smith. It is also rooted in the age-old objection of working men to those who take the benefits unions negotiate, but refuse to help to obtain them. (Indeed its continued existence depends on the willingness of the majority to belong to unions without the threat of compulsion. The moment they decide otherwise there is no closed shop.) Yet it does involve questions of personal liberty and it can be abused. In other words, it is a serious business, involving the reconciliation of a complex of personal rights and social interests. Not a fit subject for wilful distortion or worse.

WILLIAM MCCARTHY

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PAUL JOHNSON *writes*: I don't at all agree that I am guilty of misrepresentation. Readers can judge for themselves by looking at William McCarthy's book *The Closed Shop in Britain* (University of California Press 1964).

Sir, As Paul Johnson's article (NS 3 September) refers to my letter to the UCATT-sponsored MPs, I should like to make it clear that I have now withdrawn the allegations made against Mr Jack Jones in that letter and have written to him in the following terms:

> I have to acknowledge receipt of your letter dated 7 September, when further reference is made to a letter of mine to MP members of our parliamentary panel and a copy of which you say you have in your possession. I acknowledge that taking into account Les Kemp was first appointed Deputy Chairman of the CITB in July 1973, the facts on which my letter was based were incorrect and would exclude the justification for the reasoning set out in that letter. The reference in my letter to Les Kemp's appointment to the Peterborough New Town Commission was not precise but I acknowledge from the time given in your letter of October 1974 that this was long before any intention by Les Kemp to retire.
> On these main facts, I acknowledge it excludes any possibility that you or your union in any way exerted any influence over the ministers concerned in Les Kemp's appointments. I have already indicated to you my respect for your personal integrity and trust that this letter accompanied by my apologies for any distress caused to you by the situation created by my letter will help maintain the good comradeship which has existed between us.

G. F. SMITH
General Secretary
Union of Construction, Allied Trades and Technicians
UCATT House
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PAUL JOHNSON *writes*: I, of course, accept that Mr Jack Jones had nothing to do with Mr Les Kemp's appointments. Any inference to the contrary derived from my article would be quite unfounded, as would any suggestion that Mr Jack Jones lacks personal integrity. That was not the point of the article and I regret it if it has been misunderstood.

Breaking the Banks

Sir, Your criticism of the clearing banks (NS 17 September) could be widely extended. One recalls their hostility to the concept of the National Giro that helped to delay its introduction by several years, their non-disclosure until quite recently of their terms of business with millions of personal account holders, and the way in which they largely filled their boards with non-executive directors whose financial expertise was usually minimal. Yet the clearing banks are now modernising themselves quite fast. Importantly, they have moved rapidly – to an extent regarded in some quarters as imprudent – into the highly competitive field of medium-term lending, now accounting for 40 per cent of their advances.

At the same time the Labour Party policy statement is most uncomprehending. It deplores the extent to which British industry is self-financing, while seemingly unaware that, through their taxation policies, post-war Labour governments encouraged all but family companies to plough back profit; taxation discrimination against the payment of dividends ended only in 1973 under the new imputation system. The statement clearly envisages even more medium-term lending by the primary banks, overlooking the cause of the débâcle of the secondary banks in 1972/73, which fell into the trap of using short-term deposits for longer-term investment. Furthermore, the statement does not even touch on the greatest practical investment problem facing our industry (not a shortage of funds with less than 50 per cent of agreed bank facilities currently being used). The problem is in getting the decision right as to the quality of any proposed investment; poor productivity from new investment is a national problem that is a cause of concern.

The end purpose of the nationalisation proposals is 'sustained investment' by industry, according to Mr Benn. Based on the past investment judgments made by politicians such as Mr Benn, depositors and policy holders would have good reason for concern about their savings, if politicians ever came to control their disposition.

S. GRANT

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The PM and Private Schooling

Sir, I don't know Donald Churchill, I don't know Hartley Shawcross – thank God – but for the latter to impute that the former's views on state education are held in order to gain 'some political advantage' must be not only inaccurate but perversely paranoiac.

If 'it is accepted as a recognised human right that parents have the right to decide on the education of their children', it surely must not be a right limited by the financial standing of such parents. Which surely brings us back to Donald Churchill's point. The aim of the Labour Party should be the furtherance and development of state education for all, regardless of one's financial standing within that state. The accusation of 'bigotry and intolerance' that Mr Shawcross flicks at Donald Churchill should surely rest on the shoulders of any leader of a party that countenances one thing for its supporters and another for even a single member of its hierarchy.

PETER PORTEOUS

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Auden's Collected Poems

Sir, In selecting a reviewer for Professor Edward Mendelson's edition of W. H. Auden's *Collected Poems* you certainly went one better than *The Times Literary Supplement* – which settled for one of his students at Yale – by employing the Professor himself. But this sort of thing tends to turn criticism into a closed shop and I hope you can find space for a voice from the 'suburb of dissent'.

It is not my purpose here to examine in detail the way Professor Mendelson has handled the 'hundreds' of minor textual problems he encountered while preparing his edition, nor to chase misprints (there's a nasty one, incidentally, in the last stanza of *They*); but rather to question certain basic principles on which the edition is organised.

As Auden's literary executor Professor Mendelson quite properly considers himself, in his editorial role, as bound by the poet's wishes. It is not entirely clear, however, what those wishes were; and there seems to be an element of double-think in keeping suppressed, so far as the collected volume is concerned, discarded poems and the earlier versions of

Victorian Glass
GEOFFREY WILLS
In this book Geoffrey Wills provides a mainly chronological account, dealing with the state of glass-making in the early years of the young Queen's reign, the Great Exhibition of 1851 and other important exhibitions, the influence of Bohemia and Venice, etching and cameo carving, press-moulded and other late varieties, and Nailsea-type glass. (approx. £7 net November)
British Coin Designs & Designers
HOWARD LINECAR
A survey of British coin designs from the silver pennies of the Norman Conquest to the varied coins of Elizabeth II.
(approx. £12 net November)
Bell
6 Portugal Street London WC2A 2HL

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revised ones, while at the same time planning to publish them next year in a separate volume. Either those poems should have been included in the volume purporting to contain the collected poems (where appropriate, in two versions); or, if that would not have been Auden's wish, those concerned should wait a decent interval before issuing a true 'collected poems' and, in the meantime, keep in print the earlier collections – *Collected Shorter Poems 1927-1957* and *Collected Longer Poems* – as compiled by Auden, and supplement them by a *Collected Shorter Poems 1958-1973*.

Even as presented the new collection has basic flaws. For example, by preserving the integrity of the sections into which Auden, in *Collected Shorter Poems 1927-1957*, grouped the poems, Professor Mendelson has had to slot in the longer poems between the sections, thus disturbing the broad chronology of the work. The result is that *New Year Letter* (1940) is printed before poems from *Another Time* written just before the war; and *For the Time Being, The Sea and the Mirror* and *The Age of Anxiety* (1941-46) are printed after several of the post-war poems from *Nones*. This blurs and distorts the shape of the work and will prove misleading to students. Another flaw, that may at first seem trivial, is the deliberate policy of adopting, in the post-1939 poems, such American spellings as 'labor', 'color', 'harbor', 'honor' etc., a piece of discourtesy to English readers of which Auden himself would have been incapable. But it is linked with a serious heresy.

The volume announced for next year containing the discarded poems and earlier versions of revised poems is to be entitled, we are told, *The English Auden*. The texts to be used are those as they existed in 1939, a year described by Professor Mendelson as 'cataclysmic', not because in September the second world war broke out, but because in January Auden emigrated to America! This amounts to a deliberate attempt to create an artificial discontinuity in Auden's poetry, the work written before the departure for America being labelled 'English', the rest (supported by appropriate spelling) to be considered 'American'. I believe that this attempt should be firmly suppressed and urge Professor Mendelson and Messrs Faber and Faber to re-anglicise the offending spelling at the earliest opportunity and to think of a less tendentious title for the projected ragbag volume than *The English Auden*. One can only hope that an adequate collection of Auden's poetry will be made available before too long.

JOHN WHITEHEAD

The Coach House
Shoreham, Kent

Sir, If poetry is indeed what Mr Mendelson (NS 17 September) argues it ought to be according to Auden, ultimately revised by Auden, and now definitively presented by Mr Mendelson – then you are picking the most luscious peach only to squeeze it dry and offering me the throw-away. What else does Mr Mendelson mean by 'But Auden developed a kind of poetry . . . a coherence that does not need an artist's perception in order to exist . . .'?

It reminds me of a letter I had in 1964 from the star poetry producer of the BBC who is still very much ruling the poetry roost: referring to a poem of mine in rhythmic-flowing free verse intended to convey the graceful movement of Indian women, he wrote that this poem 'needs to be done more prosaically'. Is this not to stand poetry on its head, so that you too have to stand on your head, like a yogi, to try to appreciate it?

As to Mr Mendelson saying that Auden had 'explained' that 'we must love one another or die' was 'a lie', it would have been a help if Mr Mendelson could have given us the context, let us in, however briefly, into Auden's 'explanation'. On the TV shortly before he died Auden, replying to Richard Crossman, laughed off the line by submitting 'and' for 'or'. For me, I am quite satisfied that no one 'most famous line of verse' can both score a bullseye and be a lie.

FREDOON KABRAJI

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Liberty and the NCCL

Sir, I would find the General Secretary's apologies for the record of the National Council for Civil Liberties much more convincing if that egregious body had ever shown the slightest concern for men and women whose health has been wrecked in union disputes. I decided a few years ago to put my doubts about the NCCL to the test by joining the organisation: after all, I fully subscribe to the lofty aims it proclaims. Alas, my doubts were confirmed. I submitted a motion that the Council should express its opposition to the degrading practice of sending workers to Coventry as punishment in industrial disputes. I heard no more about my motion. I protested against the injury to a man's health in a matter involving a union. Silence from the Council. I received much material from the NCCL about Herr Dutschke but nothing dealing with the civil rights of Terence Miller.

Executive committee members of my own union – the National Union of Teachers – were highly critical of the NCCL two or three years ago. One of them pointed out that on many questions it seemed always to ally itself with people who wanted to undermine the rule of law. It had become a 'positive danger to the standards of liberty'. Another member regretted the affiliation of the NUT to the Council since it was 'possible for an organisation to operate under a banner of liberalism and tolerance, and yet use these sentiments to look round to see who could be hit next'.

Though the members of the NCCL that I have met have seemed sincere and expressed fair-minded attitudes, the unceasing attacks of the Council as an organisation upon the police and the army remind me uncomfortably of the pattern for violent revolution laid down in his *State and Revolution* by Vladimir Lenin. Democratic socialists, beware.

BERNARD V. SLATER

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Pilger's Protest

Sir, In his television column last week, Ian Hamilton wrote that 'it's said' I requested the personal view disclaimers that appeared on my ITV documentary series so that I could be 'as Left as Waugh was Right'. This is a lazy little lie. A phone call to the Independent Broadcasting Authority would have informed Mr Hamilton that the disclaimers were the sole initiative of the IBA, which issued a directive last spring, while I was in America, that they should appear before and after both Auberon Waugh's and my programmes.

Mr Hamilton wrote that my series was produced by Thames. It was produced by ATV. In his review of last week's film, *Pyramid Lake Is Dying*, he referred to the Pauite people as 'redskins', a term he used dismissively without ever mentioning their national name – a term considered by most American Indians to be every bit as racist as 'niggers'.

JOHN PILGER

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Bring Back Bax

Sir, David Nichols (NS 17 September) is quite right that the Proms, in recent years, have played a decreasing amount of Schoenberg and post-Schoenberg radical foreign music. Whether he is right in his assessment of the Promsters' acceptance of radical music in view of their reception of Peter Maxwell Davies's *Worldes Blis* is more controversial. But whenever did Arnold Bax rule, for heaven's sake? Mr Nichols, if his musical education occurred in the Fifties and Sixties, is too young to remember when Arnold Bax, if he was lucky, received one Prom performance – most years. Those days were before 1939. Since 1945 Bax has been played once or twice at the Proms, and (off the cuff) in the last ten years not at all. He thus joins (to his posthumous astonishment no doubt) Henze, Stockhausen, Boulez, Xenakis, Cage, Nono, Penderecki, Feldman, and Takemitsu, among the great unplayed (or did they join him?). I rather like the music of Arnold Bax, and some of the very mixed bunch Mr Nichols lists, even the very jammy music of Boulez. I don't want either Bax or Webern to rule – it's not okay by me – but if I support the plea of more Stockhausen – and I do – I wonder if Mr Nichols will join me in supporting more Arnold Bax, who is played much less than Stockhausen?

PETER J. PIRIE

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Eye of the Beholder

Sir, This reader, for one, found it impossible to recognise the ITV that John Morgan (NS 17 September) was writing about in his 'personal capacity'. Presumably it was felt necessary to add this footnote or otherwise you might have felt justified in placing the article in a box and charging an advertising fee for providing the space. To try and rid me of my disbelief I looked at the HTV programmes for Friday evening. From 6.30 p.m. until 10.00 p.m. they were *Lucky Feller, Yus, My Dear, General Hospital, Sweepstake Game, Victorian Scandals*: not much opportunity here for 'attracting an audience through a passionate concern for a matter' or the use of any ability to express it lucidly. Whatever advice Mr Morgan may proffer, it does not appear that his paymasters allow themselves to be seriously distracted.

BASIL WRIGHT

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AUTUMN BOOKS

Paul Johnson

The All-Consuming Monster

Wallenstein: His Life by GOLO MANN translated by Charles Kessler *Deutsch* £10.50

Albrecht Wallenstein, the great *condottiero* of the Thirty Years War, in his life and in death has always exercised a sinister grip on the imagination. He electrified and terrorised his contemporaries, and inspired historians like Ranke and poets like Schiller to some of their finest work. This enormous biography, by the historian son of Thomas Mann, was hailed as definitive when it appeared in Germany in 1971. I doubt whether there will ever be a definitive work on the old war lord; there are too many *lacunae*, mysteries and conflicts of evidence. Mann lacks a straightforward narrative style, essential in military biography. He experiments with psychology and rhetorical questions, so that he sometimes sounds to English readers like Carlyle-and-water; or, worse, Philip Guedalla. I do not share Mann's enthusiasm for his translator, who bewildered me on several occasions. In fact the English edition leaves much to desire. All the source notes, 110 pages in the German, are dropped, so one is often quite unsure whether Mann is quoting a document, paraphrasing it, or simply indulging in surmise. Dropped, too, is the 17-page bibliography – its substitute, listing 12 items, is not worth having; and the maps are virtually useless.

All the same, *Wallenstein* is not an easy book to put down: the man's evil appeal continues to exert its spell. We call his times the age of the Baroque; to most of his contemporaries it must have seemed an age of ice and iron. Wallenstein saw its opportunities, and snatched them. He was a Czech from an old landed family, poor but by no means destitute; a convert to Catholicism, one of thousands who testified to the effectiveness of the Jesuit counter-reformation. Friends and enemies alike thought him Godless; certainly he blasphemed in the most horrible fashion, and his guides were astrologers rather than priests. This was held against him even in an age when most people believed in the stars, and despite his lavish endowments of monasteries and Jesuit colleges. He was always violent: his record at university was one of repeated outrages, including murder.

Wallenstein married a Moravian heiress, and used her money to launch himself as a free-enterprise general in the Catholic imperial service. He raised, equipped and paid troops on the understanding Vienna would reward him in cash or kind. His timing was brilliant. Though he took no part in the battle of the White Mountain in 1620, which ruined the Protestant cause in Bohemia, he was first in the field when the Catholic terror moved to Prague and began to dispossess the rebel Bohemian nobility. More than half the land in the country changed hands, and by a complex series of transactions he possessed himself of Friedland – 100 square miles of fertile lands, mines, mills and towns, which he proceeded to develop as a personal property on the latest capitalist principles: *un grand' economico*, they called him.

Friedland was then used as a platform on which to erect a personal military empire under the aegis of the Viennese Habsburgs. The military contracts Wallenstein drew up with the Emperor Ferdinand II were unique and unprecedented. The size of the armies thus raised eclipsed the might of the Spanish *tercios*, and had not been seen in Europe since Roman times. By 1632, Wallenstein's command consisted of 54 regiments of foot and 75 of horse; at full strength this meant 237,000 men. From Wallenstein's own mines, forges and workshops came their armour, muskets, cannon, powder. From his treasury came their pay, later recouped in the form of dukedoms, principalities, conquered lands, and liens on imperial sources of revenue.

What Wallenstein could not supply, however, was their food. No one could. In the 17th-century agricultural economy, it was virtually impossible to feed such huge bodies of men through ordinary market transactions. Therein lay the horror of the Thirty Years Wars. The army – any army – had to steal and pillage to survive. This fact underlay Wallenstein's political strategy. As he explained to the Emperor, the very size of his army was an economic as well as a military deterrent. No prince or duke or king, whatever his allegiance, wanted the all-consuming Wallenstein monster in or near his territory. It did not need to fight. Its mere existence enabled Ferdinand, in the 1620s, to enjoy a degree of control over the empire none of his predecessors had possessed since the days of the Hohenstauffen.

Unfortunately, Ferdinand, and the Catholic Wittelsbachs of Bavaria, were not content with political power. They wanted religious conformity, too, of an absolute kind that the Spanish Habsburgs had vainly tried, for 80 years, to impose on the Protestant Netherlands. Here they parted company with Wallenstein. He was no bigot. He believed in law, order, authority. He was happy, in the Emperor's interests, to destroy the old oligarchical structure of the German estates and electors, and replace them by absolute monarchy. This was the trend of the times, something that Richelieu in France and Strafford in England were attempting, with varying degrees of success. But Wallenstein was sure this could not be carried through while at the same time destroying the Augsburg settlement of 1555, which laid down *cuius regio, eius religio*. Personally, being Catholic was part of his law-and-order policy, akin to his hatred of untidiness and dirt in any form, so that his chamberlains were instructed to precede him into any room he entered, and remove the smallest particle of dust. But he respected the views of others. His financial genius, De Witte, was a fierce Calvinist from Antwerp. The man he used to implement a 'currency reform', from which he netted millions, was the silversmith Bassevi, a practising Jew. Many, and at times a clear majority, of his senior officers and regimental commanders were Protestants. Wallenstein hotly opposed Ferdinand's crass attempt to reverse the entire territorial settlement in Germany by ordering the return of monastic and church estates, seized nearly a century before. He effectively prevented its implementation.

The truth, as Golo Mann shows, is that Wallenstein, once he had achieved the summit of his power and wealth (about 1630), really wanted a religious peace. Even after Gustavus Adolphus's intervention and victories, he still favoured compromise – of precisely the type which eventually emerged at Westphalia in 1648. He wanted to get off the wheel of fortune while he was still at its top. He was not primarily a field commander and rarely appeared on the battlefield himself (he suffered tortures from gout), though there is one pen-portrait of him doing so, scattering gold coins among the troops to urge them on. He was a creator, trainer and mover of armies, rather than a soldier's general like Gustavus or Tilly. Mann points out that all his battles, with one arguable exception, were defensive. He knew how difficult and costly it was to bring armies into being, and he hated to use them up, particularly since, in his military strategy, the best political results – the real object of the game – were achieved without battles and sieges. Wallenstein undoubtedly had vaulting ambition; he certainly aspired to the crown of Bohemia, and he may even have aimed at the Empire itself. But he planned to get there more through the methods of a Bismarck than those of a Napoleon.

Wallenstein was known to be quite ruthless in shedding blood when it suited him. Hence his unwillingness to prosecute the war to an exhausted finish inevitably led the Viennese court to suspect him of treason and apostasy. Stupid, bigoted Ferdinand, and his fanatical clerical advisers, could not recognise the curious modern cast of Wallenstein's mind. He had, indeed, been distrusted right from the start: his greed, his saturnine humours, his authoritarian ways, bursts of anger, and contempt for the *formulae* of Catholic courts, made him not only an over-mighty subject but an almost intolerable one.

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So long as he was energetic and successful, he could not be touched. But by 1633, his desire for peace and rest was only too apparent and his health in manifest decay. Early next year Ferdinand had him condemned to death, in secret and in his absence. Had Wallenstein been still active, the sentence might well have remained nugatory. But he was by now hopelessly bedridden, and in constant pain. Execution was entrusted to two Scots mercenaries, Gordon and Leslie, and an Irishman, Butler. The actual assassin was another Irishman, Devereux, and here, by way of illustrating Mann's historical method, is his description of the blow:

> He had to aim for the middle, a little below the breast-bone, and, one foot planted forward, guide his thrust upward. Diaphragm and stomach pierced, the major artery cut, the lung tattered, death's gigantic jagged blade ripped through four, five organs where one would have sufficed. Fire, choking pain, spiralling suction. Once more, a fragment of a second by human measure, consciousness may have awoken to that light of which none has ever told. Then, the body sinking to the ground, night, redeeming night.

What can one say? Herr Mann's 900-page biography contains much solid fact, some wisdom, and a quantity of old-fashioned fine writing. I itched for the blue pencil.

Alan Ryan

Holy Cow

Alone of All Her Sex by MARINA WARNER *Weidenfeld* £6.50

However cynical you may be about the Immaculate Conception, you can't help admiring the miracle of immaculate timing which brings us this history of the myth of the Virgin in a week when public interest in the sexual behaviour of the Holy Family had reached such a ludicrous height. In fact, Marina Warner's hefty volume is a work of considerable seriousness: the best part of a 100 pages of notes, bibliography and appendices on such problems as the plethora of Marys in the *Golden Legend* provide the scholarly underpinning of a perhaps excessively sober account of Mary's role as Virgin, Queen, Bride, Mother and Intercessor. She does notice in passing the curious aspiration of Jens Joergen Thorsen to depict Christ 'as a warlord, love apostle, eroto maniac, drunkard, idealist and revolutionary', but almost the nearest thing to a joke is provided by Calvin's observation on the amount of the Virgin's milk needed to supply all the churches and convents which claimed to have a few drops:

> There is so much that if the Holy Virgin had been a cow or a wet nurse all her life, she would have been hard put to it to yield such a great quantity.

The book begins, quite rightly, with the demonstration of something it is always hard to credit – the extraordinary paucity of references to the Virgin in the New Testament. There are hardly any in the two oldest gospels, and the elaborate account of Christ's infancy which is given by St Luke emerges from any sophisticated analysis looking utterly unlike a biographical narrative. It is an allegorical poem about the divinity of Christ and his role in fulfilling the promises of the Old Testament, not a literal account of the circumstances of his birth. The shortage of material is one problem; its nature is another. The first commentators noticed at once that Christ did not treat his mother with the love and respect due to the Virgin of Catholic tradition; he turned from her and his family to his disciples, retorting to the woman who cried out, 'Blessed is the womb that bore thee and the paps which thou hast sucked', 'Yea, rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it'. As Marina Warner says, it all amounts to 'startlingly small plunder on which to build the great riches of Mariology'.

Thereafter, she demonstrates very thoroughly how those riches were accumulated. We are conducted through the *Apocrypha* and the *Golden Legend*, shown the similarities between the Christian concern with the Virgin birth and the insistence of Trobrianders and Yap islanders that *all* human births have their origin in the activity of spirits, and given a blow-by-blow account of the dispute over the Immaculate Conception – literally, for clashes between the supporters of the Jesuits and the Dominicans

> were so frequent and so bloody that in 1616 Pope Paul V forbade all discussion of the subject from the pulpit. In 1622 absolute silence was imposed on all parties, with the exception of the sceptical Dominicans, who were permitted by the pope to pursue the truth, but strictly within the walls of their own convents.

At times, the flood of information threatens to overwhelm the underlying argument and, at times, one has the sensation that anything which once got on to a file card has now got into print.

Still, the old joke about 'everything but the kitchen sink' would be quite out of order. For here the kitchen sink triumphantly appears in order to show just how the cult of the Virgin as the model mother can be none too delicately twisted to sanctify the hardships of the local version of family life. The shrine of the Virgin at Knock, in Ireland, sells the following 'Kitchen Prayer':

> Lord of all pots and pans and things,
> Since I've no time to be a saint
> By doing lovely things
> Or watching late with Thee
> Or dreaming in the dawn light
> Or storming heaven's gates
> Make me a saint by getting
> Meals and washing up the plates.

This depressing doggerel provides the key to *Alone of All Her Sex*. For all its caution and scholarship, it is a record of Marina Warner's own disenchantment, and a call to revolt. Even readers with no memories of a Catholic girlhood will find her account of an adolescent loss of faith familiar and convincing. In a convent school it seemed that a world of music, flowers and perfume was ruled over with infinite sweetness, gentleness and love by the blue-robed queen with the 12 stars in her hair. Doctrinal doubts extended no further than worries about the shape of the Virgin's nose. But the onset of puberty, and exposure to the morality preached by the Catholic Church, led to the conviction that 'in the very celebration of the perfect human woman both humanity and women were subtly denigrated'.

To personal experience she has added the political conviction that myth, religion and ritual are not stories we dream up, to console us for the miseries of the world, but weapons which some people and institutions use to reinforce their power by representing their social position as part of an immutable cosmic order. The terror which religion assuages is a terror which religion itself induces. Starting from Radcliffe-Brown's observations that the Andaman islanders would have no way of knowing that dugong, hawk and turtle meat were polluting unless they had rituals to protect them from that pollution, Marina Warner argues that 'in Catholic countries, a woman's dugong, hawk and turtle meat are sex and childbirth'. The Church employs the Virgin's purity and her freedom from the pangs of childbirth to enforce on women a view of their condition which increases the Church's authority over them – for it alone can give the comfort they seek. The Virgin Mary is not the Queen of Heaven but a puppet of the Catholic Church, an ally in its fight against a secular, egalitarian ethic. Since the moral code whose reflection she is has become exhausted, the mother of God is now, like God himself, dead.

E. J. Hobsbawm

Look Left

Considerations on Western Marxism by PERRY ANDERSON *New Left Books* £4.00

The thought of Karl Marx, systematized by Engels and the first generation of the Second International into 'Marxism', became a comforting ideological banner of mass labour movements in parts of the West. On or just beyond the margins of the industrial world, it flourished as a theory. As Perry Anderson reminds us in what is, among other things, a splendid essay in intellectual history, there was hardly any original Marxist thought west of Vienna. Even the Germans imported their theorists from Bohemia (Kautsky), Austria (Hilferding) or Poland (Luxemburg). Marxist theory did not become indigenous to the Western intellectual milieu until after the first world war, nor prominent until well after the second. Now Marxism is more fashionable than ever before, though some of the costumes worn surprise and disconcert surviving Old Boys used to an older school uniform.

The *New Left Review* has for many years devoted itself to introducing the Marxist and associated thinkers of (mostly) France, Germany and Italy into the provincial dark-

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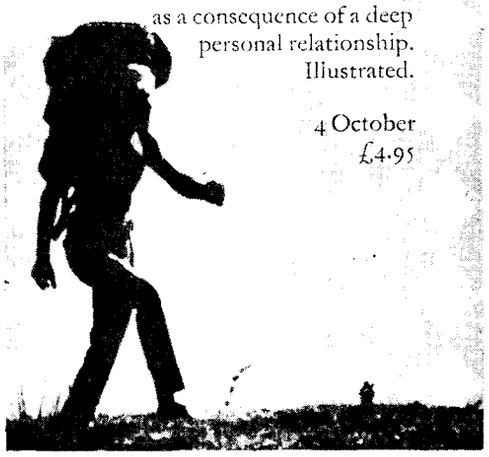

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ness of Britain. It is therefore appropriate that Perry Anderson, its most powerful analyst, should now take a long retrospective and disenchanted look at this phenomenon of 'Western Marxism'. He argues that there is such a thing, in spite of such striking differences among Western Marxist theorists as those between the Hegelians (Lukács, the Frankfurt School, Gramsci) and the anti-Hegelians (Della Volpe, Colletti, Althusser). With some mental reservations we may accept that there is.

'Western Marxism,' he argues, inevitably developed in its own way, 'via an unending detour from any revolutionary political practice', because there was no revolution in the developed countries after 1917, while genuine Marxist analysis was strangled within the Soviet Union, and hence within the communist movements. The thinkers singled out by Anderson – his criteria of selection are not beyond query even if we admit that his sample is historically significant – were revolutionaries, shunted on to the sidelines of their movements or driven into abstraction or mandarinism by their unwillingness either to give up their revolutionary hopes and attachments, or to abdicate their judgment. Above all, they were thinkers marked by defeat. 'Its major works,' says Anderson, thinking of Lukács, Gramsci, Adorno, Marcuse and various Frenchmen, 'were, without exception, produced in situations of political isolation and despair.'

The basic point is well taken, though the generalisation may be excessive. Certainly these writers share not so much 'a common and latent pessimism' (Anderson's phrase is misleading) as a disenchanted hope, a political will and passion matured – he is one of the few to recognize this – by a sense of history as a tragic process. Even history with the right outcome. But what is 'defeat'? Certainly exile, illegality, prison or death, the experience of all these writers, are defeat enough. Certainly the recognition that there would not be a Western October (the failure of theory to fit praxis) produced disappointment, the failure of Eastern socialist praxis to fit theory, anguish. Yet the core of Western Marxism, other than the purely professorial, lies surely in the attempt, most evident in Gramsci (who fits awkwardly into Anderson's pigeonhole), to analyse the conditions of success rather than in its reflection of failure. Its writers are to be criticised not for lack of optimism, but for remoteness from concrete realities.

And indeed Anderson notes in *Western Marxism* a flight into the academy and especially into philosophical discussions at the expense of economics and (except for Gramsci) politics. True, this trend to abstraction was partly an attempt to emancipate Marxism from the sometimes time-bound, obsolete or erroneous but increasingly 'binding' classical texts, and thus to clear the ground for concrete analysis. Yet there is no denying that the 'prolonged and intricate Discourse on Method', into which so much of it has developed, moved it away from concrete reality, or at least, as he notes, away from phenomena of the 'base' to those of the 'superstructure'. It thus turned largely into a curious pas de deux of Marxist and bourgeois theories, not to mention 'a general retrospective search for intellectual ancestries to Marxism'. Still, there is a difference between the appeal to Kant or Spinoza against Hegel, which adds nothing to the Marxian analysis of society, and, say, Gramsci's recognition that a Marxist political science can derive something from the realism of a Machiavelli. However, behind this increasing, though also increasingly narrow, methodological and philosophical sophistication, Anderson rightly discerns some original extension into new substantial territories of the Marxist analysis. He blames his writers primarily for building barriers between interpreting and changing the world.

So far this elegant and acute, brilliantly laconic and deeply felt survey is convincing enough, though it fits the formative period of the New Left (1956-1968) a lot better than, say, the 1930s and 1940s. The main weaknesses of the argument lie at both ends of the account. Indeed, the author is so aware of them that he has, in a frank 'Afterword' which contains some of his most interesting observations, retracted much of the first 90 per cent of his essay.

The first admitted weakness is an idealisation of pre-1914 Marxism. In spite of its great attractions, including the freedom to extend analysis 'into domains that had not been directly touched by Marx', and its readiness to welcome intellectuals into politics, the fact remains that many pillars of Marxism – Kautsky, Plekhanov, Adler, Bauer – failed to pass the test of 1914. Indeed, much of the characteristic 'Western Marxist' turn towards idealist philosophical ancestors, and away from both economics and natural science (including Engels), originated then, as a reaction in favour of revolution and against a Marxist orthodoxy whose inevitabilistic evolutionism had ended in mere reforms and cooption. The New Lefts of the 1960s were in some ways anticipated.

The second weakness lies in the assumption, only partly retracted, that with the resumption of capitalist instability and, as Anderson appears to believe, rosier prospects for Western revolutionaries, Western Marxism can readily return from its 'prolonged detour' to the main highway. But that is not the same thing as a freer, more realistic and more confident Marxist analysis of where the world is going and ought to go. Except in terms of a highly general historico-economic analysis of capitalism and its development, there is no such highway.

Least of all is it likely to be rejoined, as Anderson suggests, via the Trotskyist tradition even if (as is highly doubtful) this can be regarded as an independent branch of Marxist *theory*. It is true that this tradition has remained independent both of Stalinism and Western Marxism. However, intellectually it has been quite unable to transcend the historical framework of the communist discussions in the USSR of the 1920s, from which it derives; whether in the matter of the Soviet Union or in its international perspectives. Anderson admits this. Politically and sociologically it suffers from the major weakness of sectarianism, imposed on it by the original failure of the attempt to set up a Fourth International. Trotsky's brilliant and sometimes prescient writings are now being integrated into the general corpus of Marxist discussion, from which they should

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never have been excluded. Marxists of Trotskyist provenance will no doubt continue to produce important work. But unless the character of this movement is transformed, its theoretical potential will remain limited by its historical origins and commitments.

These problems are recognized in Anderson's 'Afterword', though the queries about the Marxist classics it contains are too summary to be more than a trailer for another and larger book, which the author is amply qualified to write. (No doubt he will in any case elaborate the important but frustratingly brief note on the relation between theory and practice, history and theory.) Meanwhile, this is a concise, brilliant but broken-backed book. In the short run it will be read chiefly as an essay in intellectual history. In the longer run it may turn out to anticipate further major work by a remarkably gifted and powerful, and certainly an utterly unprovincial, British theorist.

Derek Beales

Duce et Decorum

Mussolini's Roman Empire by DENIS MACK SMITH *Longman* £7.50

'Italy has her empire at last: a fascist empire . . . An empire of peace . . . An empire of civilization and humanity . . . That is in the tradition of Rome.' Thus Mussolini gloried in the conquest of Abyssinia. He envisaged with relish fighting a fourth Punic war. He liked being compared to Augustus.

Denis Mack Smith describes in this book the rise of fascist imperialism in theory and in practice, with strong emphasis on the Duce's personal role. He has no difficulty in demonstrating, with verve, clarity and wit, the inherent fatuity of it all. The Roman gloss was only one aspect of the propaganda. The claims of the Savoy dynasty to the crusading kingdom of Jerusalem were exploited almost in the same breath as Mussolini's assumption, as successor of the Caliph in North Africa, of the protectorate of Islam. But fascism was, equally, represented as a great new cleansing doctrine which was transforming the people of Italy, hitherto feckless, into dedicated warriors, about to dominate and civilize the world, freeing it from the influence of America, Britain, Bolshevism, *et al.*

Mussolini was pre-eminently the journalist, believing that propaganda was the main weapon required in war. Whatever his other limitations, 'he gave a virtuoso performance as an illusionist'. His armed forces were said to be vast – a figure of 12 million men under arms was sometimes mentioned – and the best in the world, supplied with secret death rays. (When it came to the point, 3 million was the most that could be mobilised.) Their victories were proclaimed easy, but of course had to be accompanied by the most glorious deeds of

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heroism in the face of terrible odds, justifying the award of record numbers of medals.

His fantasies about Britain were especially ludicrous. He worked out 'that there would soon be only 30 million people in the British Isles, "all of them very old" '. By another calculation there were 7 million British spinsters 'too ugly to get married'. Indiscriminate tonsillectomy was sapping the morale of the British people, as were the novels of Virginia Woolf, Galsworthy, Chesterton and Belloc.

But for all his bombast he showed even in 1940 that he could still assess the international situation with a measure of realism and cunning. He first tried to remain neutral. He declared war only when it seemed that Italy could make substantial gains without actually fighting. He knew very well that he was in no position to attack the strong. He never committed himself wholly to Hitler, and continued to prepare against German invasion. This resembles the kind of unheroic policy which most of the Powers were trying to get away with. But, once he had entered the war, Britain proved a surprisingly dangerous enemy, and Germany a fatal ally.

Mack Smith's book asserts two main propositions, mainly for the benefit of Italian readers. First, fascism and Mussolini were absurd and incompetent. Secondly, they were bound to lead Italy into involvement in World War II and so humiliation and impoverishment. 'The nature of Mussolini's political career is better revealed by what fascism became than by how it began.'

This last dictum sounds uncommonly like a piece of Whig historiography. Although this tendency still flourishes in economic history, it is generally supposed to have been discredited in other fields. Mack Smith himself has done more than anyone else to confute those who have interpreted the whole of Cavour's policy in the light of his final achievement in unifying Italy. Certainly, fascism and its avowed militarism were largely shams; and yet the ideology, ridiculous though it was, made it difficult for Mussolini to shun war. But it does not seem that he had become the prisoner of his own myth by 1940. Nor did Italy's humiliation and impoverishment in the second world war owe everything to fascism. True, Mussolini's regime purveyed uniquely exaggerated propaganda. The humiliation, when it came, was all the greater. If you tell a big enough lie, people will eventually wake up to its falsity. But any Italian government would have had difficulty in balancing German and Allied pressure without incurring invasion, defeat and economic ruin. The ruthlessness of German policy, and the military and naval achievements of Germany and the Allies, which are assumed rather than expounded in this book, left Italy little room for manoeuvre.

'It is not possible that I, the Duce, should become the laughing stock of Europe.' Mussolini himself advanced this as an argument for intervention in 1940. Mack Smith in this book underlines the irony of the proposition in a general sense, and the fatal results of its particular application. The depth of his learning is evident from the end-notes. But the text itself is racy and exceptionally entertaining.

Richard Shone

V.

The Question of Things Happening: The Letters of Virginia Woolf Vol. II 1912-1922 edited by Nigel Nicolson and Joanne Trautmann *Hogarth Press* £9.50

> Thus we live in her presence, and often fall, as with living people, into unconsciousness. She goes on talking, we half listen. And then something she says rouses us. We add it to her character, so that the character grows and changes, and she seems like a living person, inexhaustible.

This is Virginia Woolf on one of the great letter writers, Mme de Sévigné. It applies equally well to her own correspondence which, with this second fat volume, is well into its stride and likely to place her, when publication is complete, next to the French woman she so much admired.

Curiously, she has few of those qualities which recommend to us the letters of the past. She is not much inclined to self-revelation and neither does she go in for that chronicling of events which is apt to bore one stiff in many another collection. It's a considerable relief to find the first world war only lightly touched on, though we are conscious of her abhorrence. She makes little differentiation between the great and the obscure, the mundane and the exceptional. Her curiosity is so embracing and her eye so catholic that everything is treated to the same vigorous throwing-away of all the props that have distinguished other letters. She sustains her structures through sheer force of imagination, romping through facts, information, descriptions to get at her own peculiar view of life. And deep at the centre, there is a firm core of privacy and self-knowledge which prevents her letters from being too dazzling, mere torrents of words.

The book's early pages, starting with her honeymoon, glow with the obvious happiness she and Leonard found in each other's company. But there are soon two interruptions in the flow of letters – in the summer of 1913 when she attempted suicide by swallowing 100 veronal tablets, and from March to August of 1915, her longest attack of insanity. The letters written to Leonard from a nursing home in 1913 are pitifully moving with their abrupt, child-like sentences imploring confirmation of their love. After weeks of slow recovery, we glide once more into life as she writes her second novel *Night and Day* (though she says nothing of its progress) and becomes involved again in the lives of her friends, many of whom at this period were conscientious objectors.

She spent her time between Hogarth House, Richmond, and a country home in Sussex, first at Asheham and then in 1919 at nearby Monk's House. Some of the best passages evoke the downland landscape and the seasonal changes of their garden where Leonard took charge. From 1917, that miracle of English amateurism, the Hogarth

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Press, clanks away through the pages – its publications, its employees and the time-consuming but, for Virginia, therapeutically valuable occupations of type-setting and distribution. The book ends with the publication of *Jacob's Room*, of all her novels the nearest in style to her letters, an oblique tribute to those killed in the war. Its experimental nature is paralleled in the correspondence by references to Freud, Picasso, Proust, visits from Forster and Eliot, her exasperated reading of *Ulysses*. We leave her at the age of 40 writing to Vita Sackville-West, whom she had just met and who doubtless will dominate the next volume.

The letters before 1912 charted the transition from the late Victorian world of Hyde Park Gate to the gradual adoption of a more adventurous way of life among the squares of Bloomsbury. She found it less easy to break with her past than did her sister Vanessa, who came to be ruthless with old family friends and relations. But even Virginia's meetings with those shadowy figures have an element of the waxworks about them. She writes of them less and less tolerantly even though they inspire her to some of the most amusing lines in the book. The accidental death of the once adored Kitty Maxse, part inspiration for Mrs Dalloway, receives the barest mention – 'No, one couldn't go on with people like that,' she tells Roger Fry. On the other hand she can be dismissive of the younger people she meets at the 1917 Club and at the Omega Workshops – earnest and disembodied she finds them, with none of that largeness of character she saw, for example, in Violet Dickinson, one of those 'mellow spinsters . . . who have had their noses in every cesspool since about the year 1870'.

Emerging virtually unscathed from the playful asperity with which she writes about her immediate circle is her sister Vanessa, to whom the best letters are addressed (also some of the most boring – sagas about servants). They are often extraordinarily funny, peppered with bawdy jokes and cracks at everyone's expense, not least Virginia herself. 'Nessa,' she writes, 'seems to have slipped civilization off her back, and splashes about entirely nude, without shame, and enormous spirit.' She is at her most relaxed and unbuttoned with her sister – the heroine of her life – and the gossip is rarely malicious but often wildly extravagant.

This collection is much less consciously literary than the first and there is nothing like those letters she exchanged with Clive Bell during the composition of *The Voyage Out*. She reserved her diary for reflections on her writing but there is one long letter, to Gerald Brenan, which, though rather confused, is exceptional in its revelations of her intentions as a novelist. PhD-mongers will be wringing their hands until they reach it. On contemporary writers, it is Proust who inspires her to unqualified praise and Joyce who most disarms her. The editing is up to the exacting standard achieved in the first volume though Jean Marchand has had ten years chopped from his life and there is a gross mis-statement on page 409. The illustrations in the main look exhausted from reproduction but the jacket is beautiful.

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Ian Hamilton

Making Up His Mind

Animal Farm; Burmese Days; A Clergyman's Daughter; Coming Up For Air; Keep the Aspidistra Flying; 1984 by GEORGE ORWELL *Secker & Warburg/ Octopus* £3.95 to be published in one volume on 30 September

> Mr Orwell must have wasted a lot of energy trying to be a novelist. I think I must have read three or four novels by him, and the only impression these dreary books left on me is that nature didn't intend him to be a novelist.

Q. D. Leavis's steely diagnosis would have sounded less severe in 1940 than it probably does now, and not just because Orwell went on to write his two most celebrated works some years after she had so summarily put the boot in. The success (both popular and as prophecy) of *Animal Farm* and *1984* clearly has some bearing on our recent willingness to view Orwell's early fiction with indulgence; more important, though, has been his elevation to saintliness as thinker, essayist and moral guardian. It's hard for us these days to think ill of anything he did.

And yet, of course, Queenie was dead right. Orwell's gifts were not for novels. The real interest in going back to his first books now is in what they reveal about the nature of the gifts he had, and also – though perhaps less grippingly – in the spectacle they offer of an essentially journalistic and reforming sensibility straining to mimic the impartialities of fiction. Both for what they tell us about Orwell (and they are a good deal more revelatory than any of his published letters and journals) and for the ways in which they can set us thinking about how novels *should* be made, they continue to be worth our notice. This new collected edition of Orwell's fiction (heavy on the wrists and badly proof-read) is more for shelving than for reading; but the Penguins are also in print and can be got for a total of £3.75.

What impresses most people about Orwell as polemicist and political commentator is the confidence he had in the genuineness and reliability of his personal responses to the public world; in some curiously impersonal way, he offered his whole self, its convictions as well as its refusals, to whatever events the public world happened to present it with – as if, quite detachedly, he could trust that self to get things absolutely right. It's a confidence that bigots also have, but bigots tend to carry on believing the same things all their lives. Orwell changed his mind often, and almost as often disguised divisions in his temper by the abruptness and completeness of those changes. Impatient with divided states, and despising the sloth and cowardice that *prefers* balancing impossibilities to risking a mistaken choice, he placed a total (or blind, or bigot-like) trust in the notion of life's 'turning points' – those tiny, concrete illuminations that can shift a person's entire intellectual and moral course.

The early novels and autobiographical essays are full of such moments, and they are also full of some utterly determined bigots – ostensibly deplored but invariably more energetic and articulate than any of their adversaries. Consider these moments:

> It was curious, but *till that moment* I had never realised what it means to destroy a healthy, conscious man. [*A Hanging*, my italics]

> And it was *at this moment*, as I stood there with the rifle in my hands, that I first grasped the hollowness, the futility of the white man's dominion in the East. [*Shooting an Elephant*, my italics]

Two turning points, two insights capable – on their own – of altering a man's political opinions, or of 'making up his mind'. With Orwell we believe that it was as simple as that; with someone else, we'd very likely have our doubts. And there is a dauntingness in this which at bottom has almost nothing to do with the *quality* of the convictions he so vehemently cleaves to. It is no accident that the most memorable character in all the novels is the ferocious Ellis in *Burmese Days*. Orwell got real pleasure from putting wrong words in his mouth ('that pot-bellied greasy little sod of a nigger doctor . . . pawing everyone with his sweaty hands and breathing his filthy garlic breath in our faces') but he was also genuinely awed by his decisiveness, a good deal more awed than appalled:

> It was curiously impressive, because it was so completely sincere. Ellis really did hate Orientals – hated them with a bitter, restless loathing as of something evil or unclean.

Orwell invests this bad character with vigour because, like Orwell himself, he's capable of making up his mind; there's a trustworthiness, a knowing where you are, about him that Orwell's own obsessive nature could not help responding to. Similarly, in *Burmese Days*, with the objectionable Verrall; he's redeemed, somehow, because he 'really is' objectionable. And this is more than can be said for the standard hero of Orwell's early novels – Flory in *Burmese Days*, Comstock in *Keep the Aspidistra Flying* and Bowling in *Coming Up for Air*; each of them is racked, self-pitying, messily idealistic, each of them feels cheated and confused in a world run by types whose minds are made up, who know what's what, who get things done, but equally they are capable of perceiving that the only real means of opposition is to cultivate within themselves the same sort of uncomplicated competence.

None is capable of doing so, and the extent of their failure (and of the whining desperation with which it is expressed) can be taken as a measure of the effort Orwell must have had to make in order to achieve such a focused confidence in his own bigot-like integrity. There is real lyrical feeling in his description of the things that can get in the way of what needs to be done – nature, animals, romantic love – but it is balanced by a 'snap out of it' practicality that none of his woe-begone main characters ever quite manages to muster: Orwell himself did, but only – as we now know – by a series of self-conscious plungings into experience which forbade self-indulgence, by choosing the right turning points.

It is striking that the sloppiness of feeling in the early books is supported by a sloppiness of construction and prose style that Orwell again must have toiled at in order to master as completely as he did. Almost always more interested in thoughts than feelings, he is frequently capable of feeding ideas through characters who couldn't possibly have dreamt them up unaided. Would the dim Elizabeth in *Burmese Days* be capable of reflecting on the plight of 'elderly ineffectual bachelors living on small incomes and practising contemptible half-arts such as wood-engraving or painting on porcelain'? Most of the time she goes around finding things 'adorable'. In a similar way, Orwell frequently forgets that he isn't himself one of his own characters; thus he'll tell us – as narrator – that 'the slender bodies of the two Eurasians looked like the stalks of toadstools', then have the dim Elizabeth say they look 'awfully degenerate . . . So thin and weedy and cringing'. Her racism exposed, it's now up to Flory to express the decent view: 'Our attitude towards them is rather beastly. We always talk of them as though they'd sprung up from the ground like mushrooms.' Or, indeed, like toadstools.

There is a lot of this kind of thing – people looking like alert grasshoppers one minute, and doubling up like caterpillars the next – and it all testifies to haste and an insufficient grasp of any characters who aren't – like Ellis, or the ludicrous Classics don in *Coming Up for Air* – stock types. The most lucid and incisive stretches are those which are most detachably polemical, and Orwell was quite prepared to shift characters right out of character if it meant that he could thus get a crack at one of his favourite targets. More managerial than fictive, he gives you the feeling at the end of each book that he has not so much laid his characters to rest as fired them – for incompetence, for not making up their minds.

Among this week's contributors:

PAUL JOHNSON's *A History of Christianity* was published last June by Weidenfeld.

E. J. HOBSBAWM is Professor of Economics and Social History at Birbeck College; his most recent work is *The Age of Capital: 1848-1875.*

ALAN BROWNJOHN's latest volume of poems, *A Song of Good Life*, was published by Secker & Warburg last winter.

DEREK BEALES is the author of *The Risorgimento and the Reunification of Italy* (1971).

RICHARD SHONE's *Bloomsbury Portraits* will be published next month.

JOHN WELLS is currently appearing in *Private Lives* at the University Theatre, Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

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Marina Warner

Things

Violet Trefusis, Life and Letters by PHILLIPE JULLIAN and JOHN PHILIPS *Hamish Hamilton* £5.75

On her return to England after eloping with Violet Trefusis, Vita Sackville-West tamely agreed not to publish *Challenge*, the novel she and Violet had just written together about Julian and Eve, a tempestuous pair of lovers in the decadent-heroic mould of *Axël* or *Cyrano*. Julian was Vita, Eve was Violet, all Woman, Phillipe Jullian tells us – the Eternal Feminine, cruel, artful, beguiling.

Violet was 'terribly hurt' when this double self-portrait was suppressed for family reasons. For she had always seen herself as a heroine, and had deliberately set out to make grand opera of her life. At the age of 24, in a letter to Vita, she wonders about 'our mutual biographers'. In another letter, hitting a note of self-congratulation recurrent in the book (and not only from Violet), she says: 'One thing I revel in is my quite remarkably weak grasp on Reality – a little tug and I should be free for ever.' In 1941, when the correspondence between the two women was resumed after a gap of 20 years, we find Violet urging Vita to write 'our story'. She did not know Vita had already done so. At this stage, Vita seems to have forgotten the old ardour. 'I really dislike the complications and intrigues your life entails. They bore me.' At least here she is honest.

With Violet, the life-long attack of Bovaryism was so acute one cannot even wonder whether she was honest, or what honesty meant to her. The 50-odd letters of her youth, edited by John Philips from over 500, show a precocious, magpie, Francophile mind filled, as she might say, with *joie de vivre*, *nostalgie de la boue*, *folie de grandeur*, contempt for *comme-il-faut*, lots of *luxe*, lots of *volupté*, little *calme*. She is bursting with noble resolutions: 'You see, darling, wanting beautiful things really means wanting money, and one should never start wanting that.' But the future is foreshadowed: 'It pays to be small,' she writes, and 'the only real joy lies in things, not people.'

Surrounded by things, and by people who have things or know how to appreciate others who have them, Violet Trefusis later lived in a tower near Paris and a villa above Florence. For most of her life she was a widow; her husband Denys, who died in 1929, seems to have been an interesting and complex man, but remains a cypher in Phillipe Jullian's biography. For Jullian was a member of Violet's world, and he is not as interested in character as in things – pedigrees, for instance. We follow Violet through her childhood as the daughter of the King's mistress Mrs Keppel, who liked to say, 'Only the right people are right.' We see Violet in her beautiful houses, where Angora cats were kept to match the Chinese car-

FICTION

Beryl Bainbridge

A QUIET LIFE *Beryl Bainbridge*
'A writer to her nerve-ends', *Guardian*

NOUGHTS & CROSSES *Helen Muir*
Second novel, following *Don't Call It Love* ('the first novel I most enjoyed during the year,' Robert Robinson, *BBC Book Programme*).

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Chaim Bermant

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'. . . what makes Chaim Bermant's book so heart-warming in his evocation of the Jewish way of life in Glasgow and the wonderful and distinctive sense of humour which informs all that they do. I have read all the Bermant books, and, for me, this is the best."

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Coming Home

Chaim Bermant

'I was born in a part of Lithuania which was then Poland and is now Russia. When I was three my family moved to Latvia; when five I was sent to school in Poland; at eight we all moved to Scotland; at twenty I first went to Israel. In Latvia I was known as a Polack, in Poland as a Lett, and in Scotland as a foreigner. In Israel, however, I was known as a Scot. In a sense I had come home.'

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'I really enjoyed it. These were the old, hard days of the fight game that I used to hear about from my father and grandfather. Everyone interested in the sport will really enjoy the book too." **Henry Cooper**

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pets. She becomes 'one of the most sought-after women in Paris', a hostess in a society where, as Louise de Vilmorin told her after the war, 'collaboration was more chic than Resistance'. This part of the book is tiring to read, like Debrett in a bad light. Jullian seems to think that because Proust wrote about such people, they have been eternally blessed. His unctuousness can appall: 'The guests were virtually all extraordinarily intelligent . . .' One wants more of Violet (there are no letters quoted after 1921). In spite of her whimsy, she could be very dry. Of Gertrude Stein she commented, 'A pose is a pose is a pose is a pose.' But, to her chagrin, her wit was only social: the novels she wrote will probably not be read again.

Violet Trefusis never seems to have loved another woman but Vita, and in her self-dramatising way she seems truly to have loved her. The childhood of dressing-up and make-believe that Vita and Violet had shared led different ways. For Violet, the fantasy heroes of French romance turned into the drifting, dethroned princelings of café society. Vita's grip on reality had always been surer, and she had her garden to cultivate. 'Violet is mine,' she wrote complacently in her autobiography, and Harold Nicolson echoed her smugness with a paltry epitaph: 'How I like her to love you like that, darling – it is the best thing she has ever done.'

Violet was silly and insensitive in the way the very rich can be, she was 'a miracle of snobbery', she struck attitudes; yet she is vivid, alive. She made a headlong rush at life, and fell in. Afterwards, she knew how to stay on the surface.

David Leitch

The Cellar

The File on The Tsar by ANTHONY SUMMERS and TOM MANGOLD *Gollancz* £5.50

Much more than the tragic emotions of pity and fear are released when an emperor or president, a heroic leader of high estate, is assassinated. Sudden deaths of this order, whether in Sarajevo or Ekaterinburg, Dallas or downtown Los Angeles, act as a kind of erotic magnet for loonies of all persuasions. Out of the wainscot they scamper – false assassins, false heirs, bent lawyers, bribed cops, aficionados of conspiracy theory, and all those with conclusive proof that the Freemasons, the Vatican, or the Jews are the guilty men.

With the murder of Tsar Nicholas II of Russia, the richest man in the world, with eight palaces, a staff of 15,000 and a personal fortune of some eight billion sterling, the post-assassination madness naturally reached near-epidemic proportions. The fact that his wife Alexandra, their four daughters and the poor haemophiliac Tsarevich Alexei, were also butchered, raised the level of post-regicide mis- and dis-information to almost sublime proportions.

All the more credit, then, to the authors of the present book. They started work on the story over 50 years after the events. The trail was obscured by the footprints of all those who had scurried over it before. Yet their conclusions surprise us and – ultimate accolade for a work of investigative journalism – no one will ever be able to look at the story of Nicholas and Alexandra in the same way again.

Particularly the question of when and where the Romanov family met their end. In Moscow on 18 July 1918, Sverdlov, communist head of state for the time being, told the Council of People's Commissions that the Tsar had been shot in Ekaterinburg. Sverdlov also talked of escape. When the White Russians (many of them anti-Tsarist, it should be remembered) arrived in the small provincial town north-east of Moscow soon afterwards, they were able to find traces of the presumably murdered Romanovs in an abandoned mine-shaft. There were also plenty of first-hand witnesses, and first-hand hearsay witnesses, ready to help construct the version of mass slaughter in a cellar that has been generally accepted since.

Despite the 'evidence', there was a striking absence of Romanov corpses. Jewellery and clothing, yes. But, unless you count a finger, a bizarre relic which later reached England (where no one showed much enthusiasm for it), there was no conclusive evidence to support the 'cellar' version. However, it turned out to be good enough. Few people had an interest in challenging the account that finally emerged, and many – the communists, the White Russians, and most of Europe's royal families among them – stood to benefit by accepting things as they seemed to be.

The arrival on the scene of a monarchist called Nikolai Sokolov, charged by the Whites to conduct an inquiry, more or less institutionalised the theory that the Romanovs had been massacred together in the cellar, and their bodies had been destroyed by burning and acid somewhere near the mine. An earlier investigator, Judge Surgeyev, never believed this. Sokolov, whose search began six months after the supposed events, nevertheless was able to pass his version off on history as the definitive one.

By extraordinary luck and industry Messrs Summers and Mangold traced the original testimony on which Sokolov based his conclusions to the Houghton Library at Harvard. As they say:

> It was as though some future researcher into the killing of President Kennedy were suddenly to discover the full records of the Warren Commission, from which its official report had been compiled.

No one had worked through these seven volumes of original affidavits and so forth in detail before, and it is not suprising. I once spent ten days examining the Warren Commission's original evidence and still had to leave about one third unread. Sokolov's files, which are of course in Russian, must have been a daunting task. But they revealed a body of evidence suggesting that nearly all of the Imperial family left Ekaterinburg alive. The authors are convinced, and so I think most readers will be, that the Tsarina and her four daughters were

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transferred in disguise to Perm, 200 miles further away from the advancing Whites. They survived for several months after their supposed cellar massacre, and, most interesting of all, believe it or not, escaped, were recaptured, and may have escaped again.

So we are back again with the mysterious and tragic figure of 'Anna Anderson', the periodically reluctant claimant to Anastasia's identity. The authors interviewed her in the United States, where she still lives, and evidently found it tough going. Their conclusion is 'not proven', but unless I have been reading too closely between the lines it looks as though they shrewdly suspect this sad exile is who she says she is. Reasons to do with the circumstances in which the other Romanovs died – did Anastasia betray them in some way, or does she simply imagine she did? – have made it impossible for her to tell, or maybe even remember, the whole truth.

The File on the Tsar takes a bit of time to get going. Its opening is over-declamatory in a search for narrative excitement. Sometimes in an effort to be simple it topples over into simple-mindedness: in the first pages one can hear the conflicting voices of television commentator, newspaper reporter and contemporary historian trying to shout each other down. However, the moment the reportage proper begins, the book attains an impeccable standard, and never falls below it. The subject is profoundly complex but it has been so thoroughly mastered that the reader is never confused.

Alan Brownjohn

Carnal Knowledge

Jack Straw's Castle by THOM GUNN *Faber* £3.25 and £1.95

The title-poem of Thom Gunn's new volume is a scary sequence which concentrates in itself most of the thematic and technical problems this considerable poet now faces. In a famous early Gunn poem, 'Human Condition', the castle image stood for a defiant, existential individualism, spelt out in six tight-lipped stanzas. Today, the personal fortress is depressingly lonely, full of sinister apprehensions (furies with 'mad puppety heads') and nightmares which reproach the poet for dreaming them. It has more rooms and voices than he can comprehend, ominous cellars, and a staircase which stops in air. And it takes nine pages and 11 sections before he can bring himself to live with the man he finds in it. Coming to terms with all this appears to have been a harsh necessity. But the poem only partially works: read as a whole, it feels wilfully bizarre, and ragged in structure.

This newly vulnerable Gunn, at times almost inarticulate with self-doubt ('nothing outside the bone/nothing accessible/the ambush and taking of/meaning were nothing'), is a very different proposition from the brutally confident *persona* of the earlier books. There is some real gain in the gentler, more patient attention to detail in 'Thomas Bewick' or 'Last Days at Teddington':

> How sociable the garden was.
> We ate and talked in given light.
> The children put their toys to grass
> All the warm wakeful August night.
>
> So coming back from drinking late
> We picked our way below the wall
> But in the higher grass, dewed wet,
> Stumbled on tricycle and ball.
>
> When everything was moved away,
> The house returned to board and shelf,
> And smelt of hot dust through the day,
> The garden fell back on itself.

But other poems here leave the impression that this is still uncertain territory for him. Gunn has lived as a poet, as he implies in another earlier poem, 'by habit of the will', and therefore 'cannot contemplate the past'. He's now into his middle years, where recollection, nostalgia even, are beginning to seem eligible subjects for poetry; and he lacks the resources (so far) to make much of them. 'Hampstead: the Horse Chestnut Trees' and 'Autobiography' ('longing so hard to make/inclusions that the longing/has become in memory/an inclusion') tail off in portentousness for want of ideas; and 'Breaking Ground', set in Kent and Monterey and concerned with thoughts of loved ones, is simply not as affecting as he would want it to be.

Turning back to old themes and habits,

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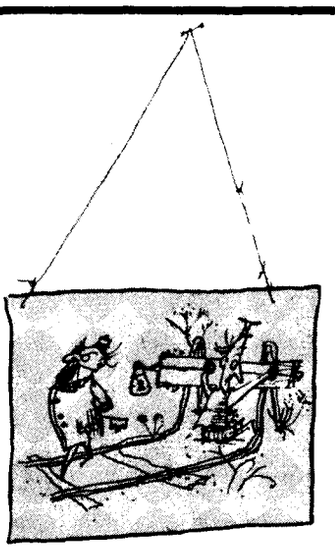

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he writes well: 'Iron Landscapes' and 'The Corporal' (as much about corporeal existence in general as about one particular young soldier) are as good as anything he has done for some time:

> Who would not have considered him
> Unsoldierly as an animal,
> Being the bright reverse of death?
>
> Yet something fixed outlined the impulse.
> His very health was dressed to kill.
> He had the acrobat's love of self
> – Balancing body was his skill
> Against the uniform space of death.

Yet it is essentially change, renewal and variety that Gunn is after; and a way of looking into some darker cellars than any he has explored before. The result is an even more mixed book, in both approach and quality, than his last, *Moly*.

Part of the trouble is certainly technical. For quite a time now, Gunn has been trying to do things differently (getting away from the powerful iambics which come to him so easily), and in *Jack Straw's Castle* he has gone farther than ever before. In 'The Geysers', describing a hippy health resort in a Californian valley, nicely modulated heroic couplets get broken down, stretched, and spaced out during a drug-trip in the bath-house:

> green moonlight, smell of dope
> the shining arms and eyes
> staring at me without surprise

If the effect here is merely weird, things turn positively disastrous when Gunn dedicates 'Wrestling' to the American poet Robert Duncan and duly lifts off into the void:

> interpreted
>
> the sun and moon, for
> signs, for seasons
> hang in darkness
> visible mysteries
> fire
> and reflected fire

Gunn's best venture outside strict forms has been into a personal kind of slow, heavily-stressed free-verse line. In this book, 'Plunge' and 'The Cherry Tree' seem on the way to marrying this successfully with the rhythms of latter-day American free verse. But the quest for new forms seems to leave him, generally, less rather than more able to accommodate the changes in mood and tone. It's all too thoroughgoing and hazardous, on the evidence of this consistently interesting but very uneven volume, for a poet who now urgently needs to settle on the right mode for the major poetry which one feels he is capable of giving us.

T·L·S THE TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT

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John Wells

The Artiste

Joyce Grenfell Requests the Pleasure by JOYCE GRENFELL *Macmillan* £4.95

The odd thing about the first volume of Joyce Grenfell's autobiography is the sudden light it casts on the use of the word 'artist'. The inappropriateness of it in a practical context struck me with renewed force only the other day during a costume fitting at May's, when one of the assistants was describing the dissatisfaction of a company at the loose fit of authentic Thirties trousers round the seat, and said 'the artists went mad'. Applied to beetroot-faced comedians barging through stage doors in shiny dinner-jackets it seems misplaced, and more so somehow, when the alcoholic in question, for reasons best known to the profession, is described as 'an artiste'.

Joyce Grenfell, on the other hand, is an artist in the old-fashioned camp-stool, floppy hat and easel sense (she wanted as a child to be a painter). Her sense of water-colour economy remains, and by far the most memorable passages of her book are the gently mannered sketches of interiors:

> I see us now, standing in our pink petticoats, straight up-and-down crêpe de chine slips with bands of lace over the top, our peculiar Twenties figures forced flat by bust-bodices . . . our hair water-waved or marcelled in regular undulations.
>
> All the rooms my mother lived in were light. Pale rooms with notes of strong colour, geranium pink, 'lip-stick'-red, chalk-blue, saffron-yellow.

But what is fascinating, beneath the surface of the writing, is the way in which her related gifts of observation and reproduction in the realm of mimicry were drawn out of her, first privately, after a false start at RADA as a girl, and then later, after meeting Herbert Farjeon at a party, publicly, when she took her place beside the artists and artistes of the theatre.

The bridge from private to public was provided by J. L. Garvin, whom she met, characteristically, at lunch at Cliveden. He offered her the job of radio critic on the *Observer*, plus four lines of advice that are perhaps worth quoting *en passant* for their value to more teachable reviewers than me: 'Avoid "which" and "and". Stop and start again. Facts first, feelings later. Indicate, don't elucidate. Short sentences more telling.' I say that it was characteristic of her to meet him at Cliveden only because no one could have been born with a mouth more stuffed, in addition to her God-sent teeth, with silver spoons. A niece of Nancy Astor, she had Ruth Draper to perform monologues in her nursery, Mrs Patrick Campbell to bring Noël to lunch with her parents, Carol Gibbons to accompany her first amateur recording, Harold Macmillan in a flat cap to entertain her at picnics in North Africa, John Betjeman (also in a flat cap) to show her round wartime Dublin, Myra Hess to make sandwiches for her at the National Gallery, G.B.S. to tea and Walter de la Mare to correct her scripts.

This is not to underestimate the amount of hard work and small-hour rehearsals she has had to go through; and her technique, once it had been formed, was tested and strengthened with Ensa in hospitals and camps throughout India and the Middle East against the toughest audiences, including one Cockney wit she mentions who requested *Deep Purple* to remind him of his mother-in-law's varicose veins.

But her particular gifts as an artist can be seen to have developed more simply, slowly, and for that reason in a way more easy to observe and examine than if she had been friendless and forced by economic necessity into exploiting them in more desperate manoeuvres. Her conclusions are interesting, and there is one image of her own experience of working with a live audience that remains in the mind long after the lists of country houseparty names scattered bravely grinning through the stalls have faded: 'I felt as if I were riding a marvellous great white flying horse in perfect rhythm, with perfect control.' Her thoughts on the audience's use of her are less direct, and her skill at sentiment and suffering seems to a great extent to be instinctive: standing in an ancient Greek amphitheatre her choice of monologue to test the acoustics was 'Mary had a little lamb', and the nearest that she comes to the truth about tragedy is in descriptions of working in casualty wards for the recently wounded in Italy. Miserable and frightened men, she decides, prefer slow, sad songs to merry ditties designed to cheer them up.

The book also contains some very funny anecdotes, but the best short gag comes from the elderly Walter de la Mare, told to him by Laurence Whistler. An old lady of his acquaintance who suffered from chronic constipation complained to the doctor that she sat there for hour after hour The doctor asked her if she took anything and she said, 'Only my knitting'.

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David Caute

To the Life

Saville by DAVID STOREY *Cape* £4.50
Henry and Cato by IRIS MURDOCH *Chatto* £4.00

The death and burial of naturalism is an event which David Storey seems not to have noticed. There is, of course, no more consistently deplorable facet of our national culture than the stubborn refusal of our best artists to keep up with critical theory. Had Storey not been asleep at the back of the class, he would surely have learned from the Brechtians and structuralists that art is artifice, that all semantic structures redefine experience, and that it is quite simply Neanderthal to try and describe things as they are.

Yet practice constantly belies the theory. The revival of Lawrence's early plays about life in the mining areas of Nottinghamshire amounted to a triumphant reassertion of the compelling fascination of mimesis; and Storey too, both as playwright and novelist, continues to hold us enthralled with his exact and acute reproductions of the grunts and silences characteristic of daily intercourse. It is a chastening thought for literary theorists that most works of literature inspired by avant-garde dialectics fail all practical tests, exploding in the laboratory or disintegrating during test flights before real audiences.

Saville is Storey's sixth novel and it is a very good one indeed; not once during its 506 pages did the familiar man with the stop-watch intervene to challenge my total immersion in the life of Colin Saville, the unexceptional boy whose growing up in a Yorkshire mining village occupies the novel's entire field of vision. Once again Storey commands attention without resort to the suspense associated with a plot, the predictable collision of converging dramas. His story does not ramify outwards in the manner of the *Bildungsroman*, nor does it refuel on natural catastrophes, homicides, suicides, or the abrupt entrance of demonic personalities hitherto unseen. On the contrary, Storey has adapted the narrow, almost blinkered focus of a diary to the traditional, third-person narrative mode: the reader stands at the window of the cottage, his face pressed against the cold glass, spellbound.

One common feature of second-rate novels is the tendency for the hero or heroine to emerge as an empty space, a receptacle of sensations, the sounding board off which other, bolder voices are bounced. This tendency is reinforced by the self-pity which inspires (if that is the word) so much modern fiction: the central character, as surrogate authorial presence, is fastidiously dissolved into an almost anonymous sensitivity, a passive and featureless physical envelope doomed to be bumped and barged by philistines with positive personalities. The early childhood episodes of *Saville* keep us within sight of this pitfall, for young Colin

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is a very quiet, introverted lad who reacts in monosyllables and silent escapes to the oppressive grind of poverty, illness and smoke into which he is born. But the great cunning of *Saville* as a biography is the gradual emergence within the taciturn youth of an articulate, rebellious and sometimes cruel voice. The acoustics of the novel undergo a brilliant transformation as the impact of a grammar school education is infiltrated into the unchanging, treadmill routine of a miner's home.

Only those who are writers themselves, or have tried to write novels, will appreciate the full extent of Storey's gift for mining precious ore out of unpromising ground. For one thing, he discovers situations in scenes – getting on and off buses, for example – which most writers would pass over as undramatic interludes. This sensibility must be attributed partly to almost total recall, and partly to an immunity to the conventional dramatic patterns we tend to impose on our own lives in retrospect. It is also the case that it is much easier to write about unpleasant characters than pleasant ones: indeed Storey more than any other contemporary playwright has stilled the raging tirades of manic egoists which dominated our stage in the wake of *Look Back in Anger*. And what is perhaps most remarkable about the hard, even grinding environment of young Colin Saville is that it is almost entirely free of human malevolence. Where Zola permitted himself drunken wife-beaters and extravagantly suave swindlers, Storey seems to be determined that we shall not feel sorry for his hero.

Iris Murdoch's *Henry and Cato*, by contrast, is dominated by upper-middle-class preoccupations: real estate, sexual property, and a shareholding in God. Ownership is the key, or at least possession: not ownership for its own sake, but as a source of power (between mother and son) and security. With her usual wit, flair and incisiveness, Iris Murdoch depicts the search for equilibrium, for an anchor, beneath the noisy zooming and chattering of a cast of characters almost none of whom does any work. 'I wish I had a goddess to grab me by the hair and tell me what to do, thought Henry.'

The goddess who does grab him by the hair, Colette, visits her brother Cato, a Catholic convert whose short career as a priest is running out in the salvation wasteland of North Kensington. 'I think,' she says,

> I shall just – wait – for the gods – to tell me – what to do – next. Not God. The gods. Daddy wouldn't understand, would he?

Given the evident godless materialism of the English middle classes, one can only sympathise with novelists who lure their more sensitive male characters into the black cassock and thence into a faintly exotic dialogue not only with that alien and subversive force, Rome, but also with the nightmare nagging at all our smug assumptions, Him. Even so, it seems to me something of an affectation: the church, like game, tastes best when high.

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Julian Barnes

Blood

Hard Feelings and Other Stories by FRANCIS KING *Hutchinson* £3.95
The Glass Cottage by PETER REDGROVE with PENELOPE SHUTTLE *Routledge* £3.50
Remember Me by FAY WELDON *Hodder & Stoughton* £4.25
Caviare by GODFREY SMITH *Hodder & Stoughton* £4.15

Both in subject and sensibility, Francis King is a very English writer. It is an Englishness defined by absences: the stories in his excellent and varied new collection trade on suppressions of emotion, on differences between what people want to say and what comes out, on distances between people supposedly close. His characters are mostly genteel, restrained, and slightly hopeless; they fret about their cats and daily women, love their possessions, and are defiant in loneliness and cunning in death.

A shift in the power balance of a relationship is all the action Mr King requires for a story; but this narrow field, and his techniques of understatement, focus rather than minimise passion. In 'Tree', a retired prole-hating cabinet minister exchanges veiled politeness with his sluttish Canonbury neighbour about the lime beneath which he lolls; as they manoeuvre secretly, the tree becomes a forceful symbol – of fastidious pleasure to one, of polluting arrogance to the other; while its final poisoning hints discreetly at wider things, at subtle social changes which both sides grasp. Elsewhere, neighbourly and fraternal poisonings of a less literal kind are rife: two antique dealers, catching their assistant in theft, 'sentence' him to five years' hard labour in a factory; a muscular, unpromoted doctor loses at tennis (and, impliedly, much else) to a smooth but ageing specialist. Identifying the undercurrents is simplified by prose which is admirably clean and unfussy, with a quiet humour spiced by occasional bright disgust: at, for instance, foul, fat Mrs Sparks who 'emerges from slumber like some deep-sea creature hurled floundering and gasping up into the light of day by a depth charge. Ooh, oh, oh . . .' To keep the praise English and subdued, Mr King never disturbs us with either a trite phrase or a vulgar metaphor.

With Peter Redgrove, it's more a question of trying to spot the narrative thread amongst the wash of imagery. His second novel with Penelope Shuttle opens with one of those arty killings which (in 'experimental' novels) act as a sort of plot-substitute; thereafter, the scenes shift between an Atlantic liner, a glass cottage in Cornwall and a university in America with such a lack of continuity and such an arch succession of unidentified first-person narrators, that the authors must, one feels, have written it all like a game of Consequences. But then, the book is really an excuse for its prose, which confirms the danger of giving metaphor its head:

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> The liner floats on the waves like a large closed volume, its covers tooled in black and white. The sea keeps plucking at its pages but so far has not read it. The sea would like to become acquainted with the ship's contents . . . but so far the liner has displayed only its title – *SS Messenger* – proudly as it speeds like an inter-library loan between Goode Olde England and the Great Universal States.

Can you tell it from Brautigan? Here and there the ceaseless imagising does actually intensify description, and there are a couple of gory bits (a thumb amputation and a self-performed throat operation) which have a repelling precision to them; but too often the book is a wash of self-indulgence.

Crisp, even perky detachment is more Fay Weldon's mode. In her clever dissection of bourgeois discontent she is agreeably mocking towards those whose lives are dedicated to strife, frippery and the pursuit of flabbiness. She is a sharp interpreter of the coded speech of families, and a faultless identifier of the hardware and habits which define status and pretensions. Her specimens this time are a mid-career architect, suffering from first and second wives; a drowsy doctor unresponsive to his lively spouse; and an even more torpid estate agent whose wife, a senior civil servant, pretends she is a secretary to protect his self-esteem. The women, whether happy or dissatisfied, are always the more vigorous agents; at first the men seem under-characterised, but one of Miss Weldon's points is that there is nothing like 30 years in the same job to lead to under-character. The death of the architect's first wife provokes an unexpected turmoil of guilt, lust, drunkenness, psychosomatic illness, lesbianism and adultery: overdoing it a bit even for Ruislip, one might think. The moral of it all – endorsed by the civil servant, pregnant at 38, who walks out – comes from the current graffito: 'A woman without a man is like a fish without a bicycle.'

More familiar emotional patterns characterise Godfrey Smith's *Caviare,* a benign if sentimental tale of loving and losing, which recalls Connolly's warnings about the Blue Bugloss. It's not just the contented, namey section about the Oxford exploits of Fleet Street worthies like Kenneth Tynan and Alan Brien, which reads like a spiked One Man's Week; it's more a question of the quality of the prose. Awful phrases rear up, like 'this concrete quintessence of modern Babylon' (New York), and 'another shattering foray into the cornucopia of Impressionism' (a visit to the Jeu de Paume); while the sex is all Outward Bound stuff – torrents, plateaux, and waterfalls. At one point, having fairly quoted Louis MacNeice's 'Time was away and somewhere else' to evoke the bewilderment of passion, Mr Smith decides to have a stab at rewording it himself (Professor Carey, duck): 'Time, that world champion gooseberry, made his excuse and left the room.' A pity, since behind the regrettable language is a bouncy enough yarn about a young interpreter falling for a half-Russian girl who defects to Moscow with a scientist. The only real traitor, it transpires, is the interpreter himself, for failing to keep faith with his emotions; though even this conclusion comes across a bit cosy.

CRITICS CAUGHT IN

A Web of Lace

Pascal Lainé

(Abelard-Schuman, £2.25)

Neil Hepburn (*Listener*): "Can it be so easy to hoodwink a panel in direct apostolic succession to the one that gave the prize to Proust in 1919?"

Valentine Cunningham (*New Statesman*): "The Prix Goncourt 1974, *A Web of Lace* . . . proves to be something quite out of the ordinary."

Mary Sullivan (*Sunday Telegraph*): "an idea of our perceptions of each other flits tantalisingly through these somewhat foolish pages, but escapes because the ferociously mannered prose simply cannot cope with it."

Norman Shrapnel (*Guardian*): "Its manner is expressionist: '*So, they flit across the page, Pomme and her mother. The paper can't hold them.*' But it can, it does . . . "

Martyn Goff (*Telegraph*): "The story is simple, the style lucid."

Jill Neville (*Sunday Times*): "This sloppy work, cunningly disguised as 'lucid' . . . "

Isobel Murray (*Financial Times*): "George Crowther's excellent translation keeps some of the flavour, word order and idioms of the original."

Philip Howard (*The Times*): "Not always idiomatically translated by George Crowther . . . would obviously ring more true in the original French."

Valentine Cunningham (*New Statesman*): "an impressive delicacy of touch and a confounding economy of means."

Jill Neville (*Sunday Times*): "The book is soggy with a patronising pseudo-approving attitude to the working classes and their vagaries."

Valentine Cunningham (*New Statesman*): "a committedly socialist critique of an uncaring bourgeoisie."

Lorna Sage (*Observer*): "Pascal Lainé's *A Web of Lace* is a mean, brisk story."

Phyllis Bentley (*Yorkshire Post*): "the story of a love affair in Paris, so quiet, so gently told . . which is deeply moving."

Isobel Murray (*Financial Times*): "A most delicate tale, incorporating a meditation on the process of fiction-making."

Martyn Goff (*Telegraph*): "the reader needs to read as he would listen to music."

Harriet Waugh (*Spectator*): "the reader is made to feel that he has hiccups."

Neil Hepburn (*Listener*): "Pomme, a peasant girl of remarkable emptiness."

Isobel Murray (*Financial Times*): "Pomme, a simple peasant girl, whose most noticeable characteristic is her complete wholeness of being."

Valentine Cunningham (*New Statesman*): "The issue comes as forcefully across as in Virginia Woolf's *Jacob's Room* . . . except that Lainé goes one step further."

KROPOTKIN
Martin A. Miller
Peter Kropotkin became the foremost anarchist theoretician in the Western world. His influence was immense, but because he was an internationalist, ideologically and literally, his life has not been incorporated into any national history. This critical biography makes use of both Soviet and Western archival sources to analyse Kropotkin's formative years in Russia and his years of exile. Miller blends psychological motivations with historical influences to create a balanced portrait of Kropotkin's emerging revolutionary consciousness. He shows Kropotkin as a militant revolutionary throughout his career, seeking alternatives to both Marxism and parliamentary reformism and heralding an ultimate form of transformation—the social revolution.
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Selected Autumn and Winter Books

The books listed below are a selection from those which publishers hope to issue between now and mid-March. Titles announced in earlier lists which are now due in this period are not included. Some prices are provisional, some are not yet known.

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Films

John Coleman

Reels Within Reels

Céline and Julie Go Boating *Paris Pullman and Phoenix*
W. C. Fields and Me *ABC 1, Shaftesbury Avenue*
Obsession *Plaza*

'"Curiouser and curiouser!" cried Alice', echoes of whose adventures fairly bounce around within the Chinese-box structure of Jacques Rivette's *Céline et Julie vont en bateau* (the French title is given, because it is, in itself, deceptive: 'bateau' may also mean hoax or send-up; and you need to keep your wits about you to get the most from this 192-minute length of legerdemain). Made in 1974, shot in just 20 working days, the film has been generally acclaimed by Rivette's admirers as his most accessible to date. Having seen only his first two – *Paris nous appartient* (1958-60) and *La Religieuse* (1965-66) – and heard rumours of the resistible attractions of subsequent works, one of which originally ran to 13 hours, I am content to accept (in my ignorance) that this is indeed as available for ordinary human consumption as anything Rivette has done: best wishes, then, to Contemporary Films who are using it 'in a unique experiment for a foreign subtitled film', putting it on at two London cinemas and subsequently proposing to try it out in Brighton, Bristol, Newcastle, Warwick and Edinburgh. Reasonably, if boldly, they want to know if anyone is listening out there, outside the metropolis. Pieties performed, one must come to judgment, no easy task. Even less easy is conveying the blindest idea of what the piece is all about.

This may well be a difficulty deliberately in-built by the director, who is not a one-time editor of *Cahiers du cinéma* for nothing. Julie (Dominique Labourier), a red-headed, *jolie-laide* librarian, is sitting on a park bench, reading a book on magic, when pretty Céline (Juliet Berto) skitters wildly by, dropping specs, a scarf. Julie pursues her with the abandoned items; the chase looks flirtatious on both sides; 'But the next morning . . .' (a recurrent title), the girls chum up: Céline, a sexy, second-rate conjuror in a night club, has a bloody knee, tells a wild tale of a house, a job as nanny, people after her: Julie, amused, intrigued, takes her in. Which is where the inner plot is introduced. Julie, given a highly improbable address for that house, finds it, enters, emerges shattered, apparently shoved out, possibly sexually abused (an earlier title, 'Most of the time it started like this', is calculated to arouse memories of the opening of *L'Histoire d'O*). Titillating stuff, and this erotic baiting is a persistent element, simply part – in the non-event – of Rivette's confounding of our expectations: if the film has a motto, it is 'see and wait'. Through the device of some kind of psychedellic sweets, the first of which is discovered on disoriented Julie's tongue by Céline, the girls trip, turn and turn about, to that mysterious house.

There, fragments of a 19th-century melodrama (actually, the period is almost certainly later) are being played out: and these are paid out to us via the girls' memories after each visit. A romantic gentleman, Olivier (Barbet Schroeder), lives there with a small daughter, Madlyn, two ladies, Sophie (Marie-France Pisier) and Camille (Bulle Ogier), sister of Olivier's dead wife – and a nanny/nurse, who is always shown as either Julie or Céline. This inner movie is thus handed over as bits of a jigsaw, some of which we have to pick up again and again – as with a puzzle on a table – in the hope they will fit eventually. One scrap, however, clearly displays young Madlyn's murder: and, if we hang on that, as our heroines do, there is a hope for sanity. Julie and Céline decide to thwart this horror, brew up a potion that gets the pair of them into the house at the same time, save the kid and, of course, as a near-final *jeu d'esprit*, take her boating. Another boat floats by, with Olivier, Sophie and Camille posed like wax-works. 'But the next morning' – the absolute end – finds the framing story biting its tail, only now it is Céline who scoots off from a bench with Julie's scattered impedimenta.

It needs no great knowledge of the processes of film-making to realise that, among several other things, Rivette is heavily geared to exploit, and expose, those processes to the hilt. (At one moment, C & J were going to be film editors: thank heavens we were spared that.) I suppose this is interesting; and certainly much of what happens – on the two obvious levels – is entertaining, quite apart from its potential as fodder for those dully and doggedly concerned to explore the Nature of Illusion and Allied Topics, Inc. There are a few very funny episodes, for which the actresses Labourier and Berto must take some credit in that they were encouraged to improvise a deal of their dialogue *à deux*: I particularly liked their mickey-taking about waiting for the sexual promises to be fulfilled. Another sound notion has Julie fluffing her lines – supposedly learnt from previous trips to the house – during that last visit, and Céline mugging and gesturing like mad in the sudden awareness that the kid is being fed poisoned candy: on this terminal excursion, the house's occupants are grey-faced automata, mouthing their words, unperturbed by the idiocy of two false nurses.

But, *ma parole*, what a load of indulgences the event allows itself and its participants, beginning with old C & J who keep falling all over the set in mutual merriment and reviving unhappy memories of that dreadful couple of clowns, Marie I and Marie II, in the Czech romp, Vera Chytilová's *Daisies*: laughter is not *necessarily* infectious. The lasses dress up like Feuillade vampires for a pointless instant or so (the film is also subtitled 'Phantom Ladies Over Paris'); *Persona* lurks somewhere as they switch identities; there are too many untranslatable puns of no particular merit (the poor titler has to render *persil* as 'clover' to make one work); the affair is a treasure-trove or mine-field, depending on one's definition of amusement. Rivette doesn't know where to stop; Tashlin, Hitchcock, Mizoguchi (Mizoguchi?!), Pirandello figure, or have been said to figure, in this magic carpet; the 'house' fantasy was drawn from two little-known Henry James stories; I hope, assuming the colossal sophistication of London audiences, that Brighton, etc. will be able to cope with the excess baggage. Because the Lewis Carroll of the *Alices*, beloved as he has always been of French surrealists and invoked as he is here, had a gift of consequential inconsequentiality that permits of different, sustained interpretations, from the jolly if scary nursery reading to that of Jonathan Miller. One doubts as much of Rivette's *Céline and Julie Go Boating*: it lacks imaginative economy, a sense of the necessariness of things being so insanely thus for an exact duration. Beside it, however, all's dross this week: with knobs on.

The most notable knob is that made of Rod Steiger's nose. Mr Steiger uses that slippery leer of his to some purpose, converting it into a triangle at one mouth-corner, out of which he projects an intermittently passable imitation of the most famous drawling croak in the history of cinema. Further comment on Arthur Hiller's misbegotten *W. C. Fields and Me*, drawn from the drooping memoirs of Carlotta Monti, Fields's last mistress, is avoidable. It should never have been attempted and even the line, apropos the Iron Butterfly's voice, 'She makes a sound like a monsoon whistling out of an aardvark's arse', shall not save it. Brian de Palma's *Obsession* with Cliff Robertson and Genevieve Bujold comes near to cheating in a flashback but tells a guessable anecdote about a chap widowered 16 years back who meets his dead wife's living image in Florence, brings her home to his New Orleans mansion with intent to wed and encounters a re-run of his earlier bad luck. Mr de Palma has a certain flair but still seems (v. his *Phantom of the Paradise*) to be sniffing up wrong tree.

Observant readers may have noted a reference to five movies in last week's piece where *three* would have read sensibly. Brief hate-notes on *Breaking Point* (Rialto) and *The Gumball Rally* (Columbia and Ritz) were lost for reasons of space. Since then time for second thoughts: even nastier. The first has big Bo Svenson, who might as well be Little Bo Peep for the conviction he imports, as a vigilante out to avenge various calamities befallen his family and friends. John Colicos, as a gangsterish land speculator, gives one a turn as richly outrageous as his French gay currently in *Drum*. The second sets Michael Sarrazin at the head of a group of urban car-loonies bent on an annual cross-country dri through red lights and police traps: humourless, anarchic release one fears ma become general.

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Opera

Peter Conrad

Decline and Fall

Götterdämmerung *Covent Garden*

Derisive misinterpretation has been the style of Wagner production for 25 years now. Wieland Wagner's innovations were all injuries: he cut his grandfather's scores, suppressed his stage-directions, and mocked his dramas with the lewd totems of structural anthropology. Wieland's successors have merely devised new stratagems of scenic derogation. The *Ring* which Götz Friedrich has now completed at Covent Garden with *Götterdämmerung* simply inverts Wieland's mannerisms. Wieland doted on the symbolism of the circle; Friedrich's sea-sick, piston-tilted platform is square. Wieland emptied the stage in a lunar abstraction; Friedrich furnishes it again with gewgaws and gadgetry. Wieland ignored the stage-directions so as to confer on the drama the immobility of ritual; Friedrich, fussily obsessed with exemplification, invents additional business, improperly extending Hagen's vigil and releasing Alberich to amble across the forestage as Valhalla burns. Wieland anxiously cleansed the *Ring* of its proto-fascist politics; Friedrich reconverts it to revolutionary militance. The Valsungs are defeated by the leisure class of gods and the brutish Gibichung technocrats, so Friedrich entrusts the mission of liberation to the bejewelled denizens of Covent Garden's stalls: as his propagandist synopsis puts it, in inimitably fractured English, 'with what remains it is for those yet unbred to begin the endeavour anew'.

Wieland hoped for a symbolic unification of the *Ring*. Friedrich adopts instead a hasty, inane eclecticism which has the impudence to call its litter of solecisms 'Shakespearean'. His *Götterdämmerung* traduces Wagner's lament for a deliquescent civilisation by turning it into zany science fiction, a dystopia made of perspex, fun fur and mile-long reels of kitchen foil. A crazy grotesquerie is inflicted on the action. The Norns are rats scurrying among the refuse in the cellar of the world. The Rhinemaidens are squirming egg-headed eels whose waterbed of silver paper, like Mae West's, has a mirror pruriently installed above it. The liquid lyricism of their trio is interrupted by shrieks of cackling laughter. The ring is a knuckle duster, the Gibichung hall a Habitat showroom and the women of the court a gaggle of gossiping flappers in fur coats and pink cloche hats. Gunther and Gutrune become incestuous Viscontian lushes, Hagen an inordinately encephalous insect. Brünnhilde begins as a predatory hawk, then, dragged into the Gibichung hall, is metamorphosed into an albatross with collapsed trailing wings. For the immolation she changes into black bombazine and, her hair arranged like that of the widowed Cosima, delivers Wagner's rhapsody as a glum sermon. Once the pyre is ignited, Hagen skydives into the silver ditch of the Rhine from which the nixies emerge to celebrate the cleansing of the world with some idyllic eurythmics. A crude projection of the incinerated gods flutters meanwhile on the crinkled cyclorama.

Friedrich's originality consists either in gratuitous interpolation or ostentatious omission. On the one hand, he allows Hagen to eavesdrop on and upstage the intimate, saddening scene of recrimination between Brünnhilde and Waltraute. On the other, he snubs Siegfried's funeral march: although the music is processional, Siegfried is left slumped on a wine-dirtied sheet spread for the hunter's picnic. The much-touted artistic empathy between Friedrich and Colin Davis seems a comical misunderstanding, for the producer's erratic, mocking novelties contradict the conductor's solemn, ponderous, halting management of the score. Friedrich is antic, Davis funereal: orchestrally, the immolation was an Anglican memorial service.

As the producer's aim has been to slight the heroism and rapture of *Götterdämmerung*, the bad singing may be intentional. Perhaps after all Berit Lindholm was encouraged to caricature Brünnhilde. Uncomfortably angular, crouched and stiff in posture, she makes the fallen goddess a skeletal neurotic. The voice is curdled in tone and indistinct in enunciation, capable of neither the blazing rage of Act Two nor the redemptive exaltation of Act Three. Her Siegfried, Jean Cox, is a trim cowboy, but brings to the part the discreet vocal resources of a Tamino. Bengt Rundgren's qualification as Hagen is a hulking physique. His voice lacks ferocity and authority, and he attains a compensatory dominance by making faces into a magnifying lens. The usually admirable Alberich of Zoltan Kelemen on this occasion raved instead of dreamily insinuating himself into Hagen's consciousness. Yvonne Minton as Waltraute and Siegmund Nimsgern as Gunther managed to sing nobly and movingly despite the parody the producer compelled them to enact: Waltraute was dressed as a leather avenger with hub-caps for a brassière, and Gunther became a twitching degenerate, fiddling with his clothes during the trio of conspiracy as if on the point of wetting himself.

Friedrich's *Ring* began in 1974 with a brilliant *Rheingold*, staged as a Brechtian pantomime. But that initial success implied a failure to trust the later instalments of the tetralogy. As the *Ring* develops, the austere reformist parable of *Rheingold* grows into its opposite, the lazily proliferating, mystically pessimistic *Götterdämmerung*. Shaw thought the change a betrayal: as Wagner lapsed from radicalism, hortatory music-drama fattened into tumescent grand opera. The *Ring* dialectically encompasses and dramatises the philosophical contradictions of a century and Friedrich, like Shaw, punishes the end for having outgrown the form and the politics of the beginning. The decline into joking derision since Friedrich's *Rheingold* has been progressive. His *Walküre* was a misogynist comedy by Strindberg, with Wotan oppressed by a nagging wife and a regiment of bellicose bastard daughters; his *Siegfried* was a strip cartoon; now his *Götterdämmerung* is a circus of scenic trickery in which ill-considered invention hopes to conceal flatulence and exhaustion. A proper tribute to the *Ring*'s ambiguous diversity might be to engage a quartet of producers: Friedrich has certainly proved unequal to the challenge of the whole.

Theatre

Benedict Nightingale

Sweet Prince

The Prince of Homburg *Royal Exchange, Manchester*
Spokesong *Kings Head*
Fishing *New End*

I cut my critical teeth in Manchester. The Library Theatre was my Bickypeg, the Opera House my dummy, the Palace my plastic ring; and, if this makes the scene sound a bit primitive and undeveloped, my metaphor is only doing its job. What we mewlers and pukers were hoping for was the arrival of something like the – how shall I describe it? – theatrical space object that has materialised in the great hall of the

BOOKS FOR TROUBLED BRITAIN

Eddie Milne's **No Shining Armour** will be available again shortly. It is a shocking indictment of massive civic corruption and cover-up at all levels after the Poulson bankruptcy began to bring the truth to light, but also the personal story of a courageous campaigner to put a soul back into the Labour movement. (£4.95 and £1.95) Peter Hain's **Community Politics** is for all who want to resist the further encroachment of bureaucracy into our lives whether as individuals or groups (£4.95 and £1.95) **The New Enlightenment** by N. A. Smith takes a new look at the mess in modern society where liberal idealism out of touch with human nature and man's greed, laziness and prejudices have led us astray. Political and philosophical dynamite on race relations, the death penalty, trade unions, education etc. (£6.50 and £3.50—published 30th Sept).

POLITICAL FICTION

Look out for two important novels on 30th September: **The Ultimate** by James Lund is a thriller set in the world of international terrorism, the best suspense story of the year (£3.95); **Troubles** by Naomi May gives the background of the war and the people in Ulster in a powerful novel about real life and credible characters (£5.95 and £2.95). A warming message lies behind Raymond Queneau's **The Sunday of Life** in which a soldier returning from the war to bourgeois life finds adjusting not easy, but overcomes the lunacies of civilian life. (£5.95). The great French humorist does a beautiful hatchet job on the petit bourgeoisie. Now in paperback: Stewart Conn's **The Aquarium**, a moving play about Glasgow life (£2.25); Ionesco's **Plays Volume 10**, containing **Oh, What a Bloody Circus** and other plays (£1.95).

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Royal Exchange. There it crouches, on the floor where men once came from Bolton and Rochdale to sell cotton and sigh about trade, a squat, heptagonal module of steel and glass, waiting (so it seems) for the command to blast through the roof and into the glum Mancunian sky. You clamber up a sort of ladder and find yourself on the second level of what is, after all, nothing more sinister than a theatre in-the-round, and a very fine example of that too-rare species. Whether he's sitting on the bottom perimeter or in one of the galleries above it, none of the 700-odd spectators is more than 30 feet from the central circle, a proximity that obviously promotes intimacy, besides being easy on the eardrums. This is the home of a group that has become deservedly celebrated since my Mothercare days in Manchester: the 69 Theatre Company, now rechristened the Royal Exchange Company, and as near to a National Theatre of the north as we presently possess.

The coming season promises Harold Brighouse's *Zack*, Finney in *Uncle Vanya* and Coward's *Present Laughter*, and Alec Guinness going through *The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold*. Is there, then, a danger that the company, conscious of its freshly acquired status, may become overdependent on imported names, and fail to develop a distinctive identity and style? Possibly, very possibly; but the plays themselves sound reassuring enough. Certainly, the Manchester of the early Sixties would never have found room for the curio which, along with a revival of *The Rivals*, opened the new theatre last week. As far as we're concerned then, Kleist was the sort of noise a Chinaman would make if he was trying to blaspheme in English, and his *Prince of Homburg* most probably a saga about hats, set just off Savile Row. We would have been surprised to learn that he was, in fact, a contemporary of Goethe, a fraught and wayward Prussian who ended a potentially dazzling career by shooting himself at the age of 34; his play, a poetic epic that was banned as seditious in its day, acclaimed by the Nazis, and still the subject of passionate disagreement and debate.

It's a fascinating, troubling piece, a biting critique of Romanticism by a Romantic – and one who, in his life, showed his detestation of the stern classical virtues by resigning his commission and denouncing the Prussian army as 'a living monument to tyranny'. His hero, the young Prince of Homburg, stands, clearly enough, for the primacy of individual feeling. We meet him by starlight in a scented garden, dreaming of love while the practical people are preparing for the big battle with the Swedes next day. He spends a military briefing mooning in a corner, and reacts with his heart rather than his head when he is, at last, confronted with the enemy. His cavalry charge, executed with more bravado than foresight, wins the fight in defiance of the rulebook, not to mention his general's strict instructions: whereupon the Elector of Brandenburg, who stands for law, order and duty, sentences him to death. It is rather as if the Admiralty mandarins were to string up Nelson after the Battle of the Baltic, a controversial decision and, as such, the very stuff of drama.

But Kleist pieces it all together in an unexpected way. His hero reacts to the prospect of death with the same unreasoning emotion he has brought to the business of life. He wails and grovels and bites the boards, pleading ignominiously for a pardon: at which the Elector, who is nothing if not fair, offers him a let-out. If Homburg can honestly say the sentence is unjust, he will instantly be freed. But Homburg can't, and doesn't. On the contrary, the Elector's plot turns out to be ECT to the head, and somehow stuns the demented princeling into a good German. Before long he's reassuring everyone, including his mutinous troops, that the firing squad is precisely what he deserves and wants. Out of all that romantic agony emerges a dry-run for Eichmann, willing to eliminate even himself if his Führer demands it – and, as someone remarks, unwilling to save even his Führer without a clear and explicit order. And having attained this nirvana, he can be pardoned, and is.

On the face of it, it's rather as if Shelley were to compose an apologia for the C of E, or Byron write a paean to the Colonial Office: small wonder *Reichsdramaturg* Schlösser was pleased, back in the Hitler era. In fact, the counter-arguments for individual initiative and selective disobedience are so pungently put that it' impossible to mistake the conclusion for a simple celebration of authority, let alone fascism. It's a piece to open the mind, not close it; and, in spite of the florid and sometimes distracting language, painstakingly translated by Jonathan Griffin, it sends me from the theatre more authentically stimulated than by any of the last hundred plays that have clamoured at me from my own, liberal-left side of the spectrum. I could, however, be more vividly directed than by Caspar Wrede, who is too apt to let his cast stand dumpily about in vague Turkish costumes, looking a bit bewildered by the overgrown candles that substitute for a set. Only the noise of battle, reverberating against the walls of the cotton exchange outside, communicates the feeling that kingdoms are being won and lost. But most of the acting bodes well enough for the company's future, though no one is more impressive than the imported 'name'. Tom Courtenay, whose Homburg moves from abstraction to serenity via a scene of almost embarrassing intensity – how many other actors, one wonders, would dare to retreat so unequivocally to terrified infantilism, show self-respect so absolutely abandoned? I'll return to Manchester soon, to see how the Royal Exchange fares without him.

Stewart Parker's *Spokesong* is an attractive, articulate play, set in Belfast, which celebrates the bike as a symbol of freedom and virtue, and suggests that peace would flower in that unhappy city if only the populace would take to the saddle. Alas, I fear that the mass distribution of Raleighs would result only in a proliferation of cyclists in dark glasses, wheeling along with grenades in their pockets. Still, there

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Peter Porter

The Cost of Seriousness

Once more I come to the white page of art
  to discover what I know
  and what I presume I feel
about those forgettable objects words.
  We begin with penalties:
The cost of seriousness will be death.

Not just naming death again to stoke fires,
  but thinking of suicide
  because life or art won't work
and words trying to help, Mallarmé-like,
  undefine themselves and say
things out of the New Physics: self-destruct!

Which is why the artist must play, but if
  he does he mustn't rule-change
  and say, 'Unless you agree
to Pound's huge seriousness I shan't go
  on living and meanwhile we
are an elite of experimenters,

to whom someone in the city must pay
  homage, dons give neat memos
  and our correspondents pile
up hagiography in magazines – '
  A public worthy of its
artists would consist of whores
                and monsters.

So, to turn impatience into anger
  and want to punish slow minds
  or walk through our museums
with a clock ends up as despair or a
  professorship in exile,
the world as solipsistic as ever.

At which you may ask (ungentle reader)
  why does he avoid the point?
  After great vindication
coming through B Flat this way will never
  be the same, and so the earth
changes while we stand by a grave
                and mourn.

Yes, but the earth stays the same
                too, greeting
  leaves and their sons each season
  just seasonally; the boat
for Venice idles at the green-furred wharf
  carrying the body of
the composer Grimace (Ettore),

as timetable-conscious as if it had
  on board a scientist who
  could make a food crop of grass,
and I have come no closer to my goal
  of doing without words, that
pain may be notated some real way.

Seriousness – ah, *quanta pena mi costi*! I note from a card
  that hills are dyed purple by
a weed named Paterson's Curse. That is in
  New South Wales. The dead may pass
their serious burdens to the living.

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enough raw and realistic detail to fend off accusations of sentimentality, something that can also be said for Michael Weller's *Fishing*. This is another play about Kennedy's children, here divided into trendy go-getters and sorry stragglers, little-boys-lost in the nasty Seventies. The evening moves from comedy of manners – a scene in which the ageing youngsters, stoned on cactus-justice, drool and coo over a sick oldster is particularly funny and cutting – to intimations of mortality, conveyed with delicacy and even depth. It's a pity the cast hasn't as much range and control as their author: but this is still a most recommendable evening.

Television

Martin Amis

Crassroads

Both upstairs and downstairs have long had their chroniclers, but the professional classes seem to be pitifully under-represented by those week-in week-out series/serials with which housebound persons help to pace out the years. *The Crezz* (Thames) tried to rectify this bias, and in its first episode – a shambling, largely plot-free affair – writer Clive Exton had the unhappy task of establishing the 20 or 30 characters who will presumably beguile us through the autumn. What have we here, then, in the airy studios, clamorous all-pine kitchens and spruce back-gardens of Carlisle Crescent, Kensington?

A disillusioned, though hideously convivial, lecturer in Old English, who pronounces *Beowulf* as if recommending Lifebuoy to a canine; a pair of meritocratic young-marrieds, who romp inconclusively beneath the duvet on their *trompe l'oeil* sardine-can bed; a 'filthy old man' GP, who hauntingly resembles Auberon Waugh; a vested, spotty-backed mick, who is clearly going to get much, much nastier to his three kids and already well-bruised wife; two cravatted queens, who bitch and blow kisses at one another, and make fruity sounds with their lips; a tetchy old *dame*, with whom the younger queen has what's known as 'a way'; a creaky old lawyer, whose sighing young mistress sits about haggardly smoking cigarettes; a tritely trite novelist ('it's in the form of a thriller, but it's an allegory'), the 'sexual scourge of the crescent', who is having trouble scourging the lawyer's fag-smoking mistress . . .

And so on. What happened was, they all had a party in the crezz's communal garden. The filthy old GP drunkenly tried his luck with the hideously convivial lecturer's daughter, what time the tritely trite novelist's wife alerted the creaky lawyer that the tritely trite novelist was sleeping with his haggardly fag-smoking mistress. So things, as they say, got pretty complicated! Episode number two, I am informed by my *TV Times*, tells of a 'stormy meeting' at the Gardens Committee and also confronts the crezz's foreign-servant problem. But don't let me put you off.

The Duchess of Duke Street (BBC-1) is a downstairs-to-upstairs story, being the small-screen biography of the hotelier Rosa Lewis. Plucked from the torrid kitchens by Edward, Prince of Wales, and given an expensive house and a decoy husband in the person of Augustus Trotter (Donald Burton), Rosa's compromised life is suddenly transformed by Edward's late succession to the throne at the death of Queen Victoria. Unfortunately, though, the trembling Trotter seizes this chance to emancipate himself also, and last week's episode recounted with some relish his speedy and graceless decline. Once 'one of the youngest butlers in the country', now no more than a kept cuckold, Trotter is indeed a thoroughly engaging mixture of obsequiousness and petulance. He starts to assert himself about the home, attempting to realise his dream of taking in gentleman lodgers; he falls into the habit of surprising his wife in her bedroom, and, during one of his repulsive lapses, dives snorting and snivelling into the folds of Rosa's nightdress.

Rosa, of course, slaps down her loathsome husband on each count (reducing him to ball-broken tears in the bedroom scene), and although she later relents to the tune of buying him a hotel with her savings, it is clear that Trotter's worthless days are numbered. The wretch takes to carousing in the hotel with his chums, wresting the cellar keys from the silent, quivering *maitre de*. He hires his fat fool of a sister, whose policies quickly guarantee ruin. When Rosa returns from one of her society-cooking tours, and finds the place a brandy-sodden slum, why then friend Trotter is chucked out on his huge red ear. My only difficulty with this efficient series is in deciding whether Rosa, snobbish driving, granite-hard, mean-mouthed Rosa, is *intended* to be as unattractive as her husband. There's plenty of room for ambivalence in the role, however (even E. Waugh's congenial portrait of her in *Vile Bodies* has its hard edge), and Gemma Jones's all-warts rendering transmits enough energy to suspend, or postpone, one's distaste.

Faced with the challenge of telescoping *Dorian Gray* for BBC-1's *Play of the Month*, John Osborne hit upon a novel and ingenious procedure: he took a bit from the beginning and he took a bit from the end. We stay close to Wilde, in *Digest* form, until the suicide of Sybil Vane, with Dorian being sullen, callous, lordly; we then move on, if you please, to the murder of Basil – with Dorian a cackling blackguard. What the devil could have happened to the lad? Well, two decades of rarefied debauchery, if you know your Wilde, but only an indeterminate bout of profligacy, if you trust your Osborne. 'My dear boy, I haven't seen you for weeks,' says John Gielgud as Lord Henry, who has been off-screen for 18 years (and who must have been very confused anyway, since he is 40 years too old for the part).

It had been put about that Osborne's

Hundreds of thousands of Britons go and visit the Federal Republic of Germany every year. 1.2 million overnight stays were registered in 1975, 6% up on 1974. They are tourists and businessmen, exchange students and journalists, and some go to stay. Millions of Britons concern themselves with

Germany today

by learning German at school, by reading about Germany in the newspapers or by watching news and films about Germany on television. They have all formed some opinion about

Germany today

about its people and its prospects, about the German economy and the German education, about the Federal Chancellor, Herr Schmidt, and the leader of the opposition, Herr Kohl. Some may have wondered how Mitbestimmung (workers' participation) works, and why federalism is striking a healthy balance between a strong central authority and strong regional units. We think it would be interesting to learn more about the impressions of British observers. We therefore invite all British citizens who have something to say about

Germany today

and who would like to put pen to paper, to send us an essay of not more than 600 words before December 1st, 1976. The essay should be in English and may deal with any aspect of Germany today. An independent jury will judge the entries in two age groups (under 16 and over 16, so please state your age) and the two first prizes will be one week trips to see

Germany today

Essays to be sent to:

Anglo-German Association

2 Henrietta Street, London WC2

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Dorian was going to be a good deal queerer and generally more adult than any previous version. He does introduce some hesitant hand-on-knee and a bit of bumboyish hovering, but a much clearer idea of Wilde's intention could have been gained by restoring the excisions made by author and publisher before the book appeared (they are handily listed in the OUP edition). In fact, though, these nervous amendments signify little. The heart of the story – which is the story of Dorian's corruption – is the section Osborne omits: the section that begins with Lord Henry's loan of the decadent French novel ('Dorian Gray had been poisoned by a book,' says Wilde flatly) and goes on to explore his sick infatuation with 'the luxury of the dead'. Dorian, perforce, cannot know what Wilde emphatically states in his Preface: 'All art is quite useless.' Art *is* useful to Dorian, which is why he is doomed. Do the perverse, poetic aspects of the book render it unplayable? Probably they do. If Wilde had thought the idea dramatic, he would doubtless have been the first to write a play about it.

Weekend Competition

No 2431 Set by Len the Unlucky

In this issue we print our usual list of forthcoming books. Some of these are predictable enough in all conscience, but none is miserably or grotesquely so. Perhaps competitors might like to amend this by sending us an addendum which we could print under the sub-head of **Incredibly Predictable Books.** 12 titles max by (. . . er, sorry, about the time-warp last week) 8 October.

Result of No 2428 Set by T. A. Dyer

A recent visitor to a Chinese school heard a clockwork three-year-old denouncing Deng Ciao Ping, a freshly disgraced public figure. Competitors were asked for a similar *j'accuse* from an English tot.

Report by Fat Jeff

I managed – and it wasn't easy, I can tell you – to dissuade both The Lemon Kid and the abrasive Spiro Keats from writing this Report themselves. *Not* one of your stronger efforts, I fear . . . Martin Fagg was probably right when he said, in a confidential memorandum to me, that even the sternest entrant would be hard-pressed to avoid cosiness: sprog spleen, however scabrous it tries to be, has a habit of becoming wonderfully 'wry', wonderfully 'wise', etc. In fact there seemed no danger of any entry raising a smile – until Hamill and Lucas providentially turned up in the last comp post. £7 each.

I fink Minister of Helf ever so mean cos he won't let children have force teef, an' makes us go to dentist. I allus fink dentist gonna change my kidneys like on Tele wiv masked men. Mummy gets nervus at dentist an' tells me Don't Be Frightened. Daddy says HAHA No Need Be Scared. Last time they sez this was after Daddy bashed car into lorry argooing wiv Mummy Smash! Bang! Zoing! They screem each other Yore Folt! me on my bottom under front seat. Mummy sez Don't Be Frightened an Daddy sez HAHA No Need Be Scared. It was scary I can tell yoo. If Minister of Helf let me have force teef I wunt be scared of loosin my kidneys nor nuffink.

GERRY HAMILL

Poo to Mister Benn . . . Poo Poo to his terrible fibs and horrid speeches. We don't want his nasty Labourites with their tatty red flags . . . creeping down our lane.

We don't want their rotten old council-houses near our paddock. Poo to all his lazy bingo-playing slackers who are ruining this country and filling it with smelly foreigners and really mucky trade-unionists. There wouldn't be enough room to gallop our horses, or even my little pony, if they all came here.

If everybody worked as hard as Daddy does at Slater Walker, England would be a super place. We believe in freedom and Aunty Thatcher, who talks like Nanny and doesn't wee her knickers or suck her thumb. Mister Benn does . . . So POO.

RUSSELL LUCAS

Assiac

Chess Board

No 1400 Tourneys Galore

Checking back merely as far as No 300 (2 July 53) it appears that this was not the first of our Endgame Study Tourneys, but it certainly marked the beginning of what turned out to be a 'golden dozen' of tourneys remarkable for the fame of contestants and the quality of their entries. We had Chéron and Lommer as the Judges and the award-winners included Kasparyan, Gulayev, Kusnetzov, & Zacharov, Halberstadt, Isenegger and Ackerblom. In No 400 (July 57) we still had the Chéron-Lommer Jury, and the prize-winners were Kopnin, Korolkov, Herbstmann and Korolokov & Mitrofanov; (but the Herbstmann was to be cooked by one of our young 'cracksolvers' name of John Roycroft). In No 500 (June 59), still under Chéron-Lommer, the first three prizes went to Sarichev, Baxter, Missiaen, but then came Blandford and Hooper, and among the lower awards there was Blandford again and E. Allan of Edinburgh. A good tourney for British competitors, and among the cookhunters' prey was none less than a Korolkov & Mitrofanov. In No 600 (May 61) grand old André Chéron left the Jury, replaced by Halberstadt. Kasparyan won first prize, but what with Wason & Lewis, Blandford and Penrose in the list (Jonathan, not father Lionel the problemist) this too was a good year for the British entries. No 700 (or rather 701) happened to coincide with the NS Jubilee number of 19.4.63. Ailing Judge Halberstadt was replaced by Walter Korn, and the prize list certainly does not lack celebrities: (1) Kasparyan, (2) Bron, (3) Sikdar, (4) Bondarenko & Kusnetzov, to say nothing of lower awards for Bent, van den Ende, Janosi. No 800 (March 65) marked an important change in that Lommer retired from more than a decade of devoted Jury service, and I have never ceased being grateful to my old friend for suggesting Roycroft as successor. In that particular Tourney the prizes went to (1) Bron, (2) Branton, (3) Selman and (4) young Andrew Miller, an Oxford undergraduate at the time and rightly proud of being in such exalted company with one of his early efforts.

By then Roycroft had started his quarterly EG, still the only journal in the world entirely devoted to endgame studies, and the Tourneys, from then on had the benefit of the combined expertise of the EG editorial and the 'Circle', meeting once a quarter (and privately in each other's houses). There was Mike Bent who has come to be one of the most distinguished British study-composers, Walter Veitch whose amazing analytical powers served the vital cause of cook-hunting, Richard Harman whose efficient anticipation service came to be indispensable for our tourneys as well as a good many others all over the world. (Richard's collection of thematically related studies has grown from a few thousand to well over 20,000.) For the last three tourneys the Jury has been enriched by the presence of David Hooper, one of the most distinguished contemporary experts on endgame theory; and ever since the start of the Roycroft era (more than 11 years ago) we have had Adam Sobey's indispensable service as 'anonymizer', i.e. translating all entries (most of them handwritten in foreign languages) into uniform English typescript giving the Jury numbers only and no names. In the last two tourneys Sobey swapped this chore with Roycroft for a place in the Jury. Just a few data still to be recorded. The No 900 Tourney (February 67) had Perkonoja Bent, Koranyi and Bron as prize-winners and next time the brilliant young Finnish composer won 1st prize again (ahead of Kalandadze Issler, Branton). That was No 1000 with Bronstein enlisted for Jury service; and when the Grandmaster had to be excused for lack of time Dr Staudte stepped in at a moment's notice and gave two of our tourneys the benefit of his expertise. In No 1100 we had Rusinek for 1st prize, ahead of Makhatadze Kasparyan and two generations of brillian Americans, my old friend Edmund Peckover and young Bill Jones. In the commendation we have Bent and Eric Allan as well a Blandford, Perkonoja and, No 6, the great V A. Bron. He and a good many other celebrities have frequently honoured us with their entries and I like to remember that the great Kaspar yan figured in our first prize-list and the la one, more than 20 years later.

I want to thank them all and to repeat th thanks frequently expressed to all those con nected with the machinery of the Tourney But I would like to add my thanks to th multitude of readers and solvers some of whom have been with us from the very start throug more than 27 years. I trust they enjoyed i And so did I.

Chess Solutions

Less limitation of space in solutions to be published i EG (obtainable through *A. J. Roycroft*, 17 New W Rd, London NW9 6LP).

1st & 2nd PRIZE ex aequo: Y. V. BAZLOV USS (Nos 13 & 14, both wins).

No 13: **1) Ktf3†!** (Rb1? failing against . . .Kc3 = **,Ke4** (. . .Ke3 countered by 2) Rc3† etc); **2) Rc3,Ktg** (. . .b1=Kt fails in several variations); **3) Ke6!** (Kg failing against . . .b1=Kt) **,b1=Kt; 4) Rb3,Kf4** (bett than . . .Ktf2, countered by 5) Ktg5† etc); **5) Ktg1,Ktd 6) Rd3,Kte4; 7) Kth3††** (alternatively 6) . . .Ktb1; Rd4†, then countering . . .Kg5 by 8) Ktf3† etc or . Kg3 by 8) Rd1 & 9) Rd3†).

No 14: **1) Ktb4†,Ka5** (. . .Kb5 countered by 2) Bd3 etc); **2) Ktc6†,Ka4** (Or . . .Kb5; 3) Ktd4:†,Kc4; Bf7†); **3) Bc2†,Kb5; 4) Ktd4:††!** (Kta7†??,Kc4 =) **,K 5) Bb2,Rg2; 6) Ba1** and then 2 variations: . . .**Rg1, Ktb3!** (Bb3†?) **,Rg2; 8) Kta5†,Kb5; 9) Ktc6,Rg1;** Kta7† or **6)** . . .**Rg7†; 7) Kd6,Ra7; 8) Bb3†!** (Ktb **,Kd3; 9) Ktc2,Rb7; 10) Kte1†,Ke2; 11) Ktf3,Ra7;** Ktg1†, etc.

THIRD PRIZE: H. OSADNIK Poland (No 58 Win).

1) a7,Rc2†; 2) Ktc3!,Rc3:†; 3) Kd6! (Kd4?) **,Rd3†;** Ke7,Re3†; **5) Kf8,Rf3:†; 6) Ke7,Re3†; 7) Kd8!** (Kd **,Rd3†; 8) Kc7,Rc3†; 9) Kd6,Rd3†; 10) Kc5,Rc3†;** Kd4,Rc4†; **12) Ke3!** (neither Kd3? nor Kd5? because Kt-check) **,Rc3; 13) Ke4,Rc4†!** (Ktf6†?); **14) Kf3,g4 15) Ke3!** (hg:?) **,Rc3†; 16) Ke4,Rc4†; 17) Kf5!** (Kd **,Ktg7†; 18) Kg5,Rc5†; 19) Kh4!,Ktf5†; 20) Kg4:,Kth**

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21) Kf3,Rc3†; 22) Ke4,Rc4†; 23) Kd5,Rd4†; 24) Ke5,Rd5†; 25) Ke6,Re5†; 26) Kd7,Rd5†; 27) Kc6, etc.

FOURTH PRIZE: S. A. de SILVA Brazil (No 24 Win).
1) Ktd6†,Kc7; 2) Kte8†,Kd8; 3) Kth3,Bc4; 4) Ktf4! (d6? merely drawing) ,Bb8 (best); 5) d6,Bf7; 6) Bb5,Be8:; 7) Kte6†,Kc8; 8) d7†!,Bd7:; 9) Ba6††.

FIFTH PRIZE: G. M. KASPARYAN USSR (No 71 Win).
1) Qe3†,Kb4 (best); 2) Qd2†,Kc5! (Kb3?); 3) Be3†,Kt6d4; 4) Bd4:†,Ktd4:; 5) Qg5†! (e8=Q? merely draws) ,Kd6; 6) e8=Kt†! (e8=Q?) ,Kd7; 7) Ktf6†,Ke7; 8) Ktd5†! (Qg7†? merely drawing) ,Ke6 (. . .Kf7 allowing †† in 4); 9) Qe7†!,Kd5: (otherwise Kt-fork); 10) e4††.

SIXTH PRIZE: S. T. SAHASRABUDHE India (No 87 Draw).
1) Ktg6†! (Bd6? loses) ,Kg7; 2) Ktf8:,Rb7:!; 3) Kb7, Ktc5†; 4) Kc6! (Both Kc7? & Kc8? defeated by . . . hg:, etc) ,Kte6:; 5) Kte6:†,Ke7:; 6) Ktg5:†,Kg6; 7) Bh4:,b3; 8) f4,b2; 9) Ktf3,b1=Q; 10) Kte5†,Kg7 (If . . . Kh5; 11) Bg5 draws); 11) Kd7! (Not Bg5? which in a variation more than 20 moves deep causes White's loss by zugzwang) ,Qb7†; 12) Ke6 draws because the Wh.K. cannot be cornered and the Black K. can't escape from the fortress.

SEVENTH PRIZE A. KORANYI Hungary (No 5 Draw).
1) Kb7! (f4? loses) ,Rc7†; 2) Ka6,Rd7; 3) Ka5:,Kh6; 4) f4,Rd5:†; 5) Ka6! (Ka4:? loses) ,g5; 6) fg:†,Kg6; 7) Ka7:,Rb5; 8) Ka6,Rb3; 9) Ka5,Ra3:; 10) Kb5! (after Kb4?,Ra1 White is in zugzwang) ,Ra2 11) Ka5,Ra1; 12) Kb4,Rh1; 13) Ka3! (after Ka4:? Black wins by . . . h2) ,Ra1†! (after . . .h2? Black gets into zugzwang and loses); 14) Kb4! (Kb2?) ,Rh1; 15) Ka3 and draws.

FIRST HONOURABLE MENTION: E. JANOSI Romania (No 83 Draw).
1) c5,a2; 2) c6,a1=Q (best, but . . .Be5? loses); 3) c7! (Bb7? loses) ,Qa5! (. . .Qc1? loses); 4) Ktd6,Bd8; 5) Ktb5†,Kc5; 6) d4†,Kc6; 7) d5††!,Kc5; 8) d6,Qb6; 9) Kh5! (But Kf7 or Kf5? loses) ,Bc7:; 10) dc:,Qb5:; 11) Bf5! (But Be6? or Bh3? loses to . . .Qe8†) ,Qe8†; 12) Kg4, Qe2†; 13) Kh3,g4†; 14) Bg4:,Qf1†; 15) Kh2! Perpetual, but not Kh4? losing the passed P after . . .Qf6†, etc.

SECOND H.M.: V. KHORTOV USSR (No 78 Draw).
1) Kc3,Bg6:; 2) Ktc4†! (Not Bg6:? defeated by . . . Ktd5†) ,Kd5; 3) Bg6:! (Bg8†?) ,Kta2†; 4) Kb3,Ktc1†; 5) Kc2,Kc4:; 6) Bh7,Rf1; 7) Bd3†,Ktd3:; stalemate; and after 6) . . .Kta2 (b3) draw assured by 7) Bg8†.

THIRD H.M.: I. VANDECASTEELE Belgium (No 63 Draw).
1) Rh3! (not Re1? defeated by . . .Bg7† and . . .Bf3† etc) ,Bg7†; 2) Kh5,e2; 3) Re3,Kf5; 4) Kh4,Bf3; 5) Kg3, Bh5; 6) Kf2,Bd4; 7) Ke1,Be3:; stalemate.

FOURTH H.M.: I. VANDECASTEELE Belgium (No 64 Draw).
1) g7,Rb2†; 2) Ka8,Ba7; 3) g8=Q,Rb8†; 4) Qb8:,Bb8:; 5) e5! (Not ef:? defeated by . . .Ba7) ,Ba7; 6) e6,Bc5; 7) Kb8,Bd6; 8) Kc8,c5; 9) Kd7,Bf8; 10) Ke8,Bh6; 11) Kf7,Bg5; 12) Kg6,Be7; 13) Kf5:,c4; 14) Ke4,Ka5; 15) Kd4,Kb4; 16) a5,Bc5†; 17) Kd5,c3; 18) a6,c2; 19) a7! (Not e7? defeated by . . .c1=Q; 20) e8=Q,Qc4†; etc) ,Ba7:; 20 e7, drawing.

FIFTH H.M.: J. FRITZ Czechoslovakia (No 17 Draw).
1) f3,Rf3: (After . . .Bf3: draw by 2) Ktf2); 2) Kte3! (Kth2? loses; no space, alas, for complex analysis) ,Re3:; 3) Rh7†! (but Ra7? loses) ,Kg6; 4) Ra7,Bd4; 5) Ra4, Re4! (not . . .Bc5 defeated by 6) Rg4†); 6) Kd3,Re3†; 7) Kd2! (Kd4:? defeated by . . .Re4†) ,Re4; 8) Kd3, drawing.

COMMENDATIONS (unranked)

T. BALEMANS Holland (No 20 Draw).
1) Ktg6! (Ktf7? defeated by . . .Kb3; 2) h6,Ktd5†; etc) ,Kb3; 2) h6,Bh8! (Not now . . .Ktd5 because 3) hg: wins by the †-threat); 3) Kte5,Ka3; 4) Ktc4†,Kb4; 5) Ktd2! (But Kta3? or Ktb2? loses) ,Kte4†; 6) Ka2:,Ktd2:; stalemate.

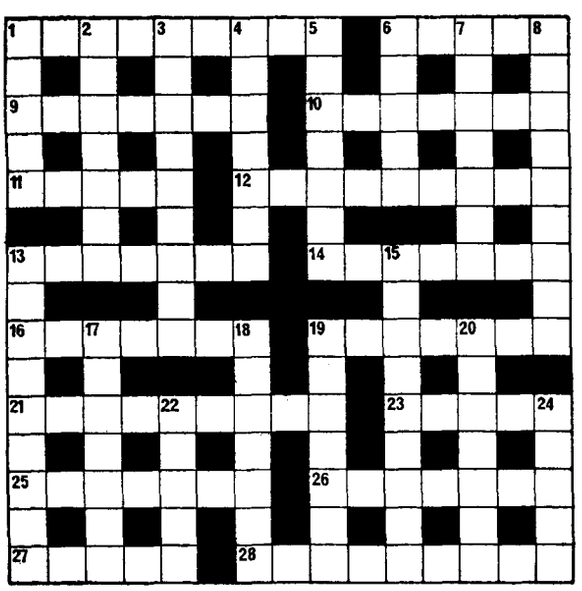
S. A. de SILVA Brazil (No 25 Draw).
1) Ra4†! (Not Re1†? losing) ,Ke5; 2) Re1†! (Now Ra5†? would lose; no space for analysis) ,Kd5; 3) Rd1†, Kc6; 4) Rc1†,Kb5; 5) Rb4†,Ka5; 6) Ra1†,Ba2; 7) Ra2:†, Qa2:; 8) Rb7:! (But f8=Q? defeated by . . .Rg8†) ,Qf7:; 9) Ra7†,Kb6; 10) Rb7†,Kc5; 11) Rc7†! (Not Rb5†? defeated by . . .Kd4) ,Kd5; 12) Rd7†,Ke6; 13) Re7†, Kf5; 14) Re5†, etc.

N. F. ZABABURIN USSR (No 47 Draw).
1) Bg1,d4; 2) Ktd8,e2 (draw also after . . .e5); 3) Kt8e6†,Kh6; 4) Ktf5†,Kh5: (Draw also after . . .Kh7); 5) Ktf4†,Kg5; 6) Ktd4:,Bc6†; 7) Ktg2,e1=Q; 8) Ktf3†, Bf3: stalemate.

V. S. KOVALENKO USSR (No 95 Win).
1) h7,dc:; 2) h8=Q†,Kb1; 3) Qa1†,Ka1:; 4) Kc1! (Kc2 merely draws) ,d4; 5) a7,d3; 6) a8=Q,d2†; 7) Kd2:! (Kc2:? merely draws) ,Kb2! (. . .Kb1? leading to †† after Qh1†); 8) Qh8†,Kb1; 9) Qa1†,Ka1:; 10) Kc1; (Kc2:? merely drawing) ,d5; 11) c6 and wins.

Weekend Crossword 1183

PRIZES: Book tokens of £2 for the first three correct solutions opened. Entries to Crossword 1183, New Statesman, Great Turnstile, London WC1V 7HJ, by first post 5 October.



ACROSS

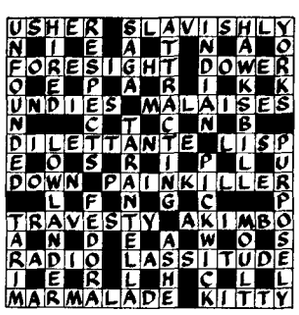
1. What the town planner may do for coloured woman cut off (9).
6. Comic who needs no backing to make him a jester (5).
9. It provides warmth and makes eloping wrong (4, 3).
10. Save up for a deputy (7).
11. Woman with a strange ideal (5).
12. To be let although there are funny holes in the roofing (9).
13. Hasty, so found in something hot (7).
14. Flag officers? (7).
16. Deadlock in trying to give him passengers (7).
19. Flags to stop things? (7).
21. Former Archbishop of Canterbury about to steal from admiral (9).
23. Entering this table I would turn it into a star (5).
25. Airman who gives way in a height (7).
26. French which showed the way though subdued (7).
27. If there were duck in this river, it would be a backward area (5).
28. Town even has a story about it (9).

DOWN

1. Swift but quiet in attack (5).
2. One who hangs loosely is left in peril (7).
3. A book on boats which will do for mountains (9).
4. Member and supporter in law (7).
5. To eat some makes a portion suffer, we hear (7).
6. Where the worthless are about a pound (5).
7. Distance to desire under the skin (7).
8. Too much medicine to act during love poetry (9).
13. Leader wrongly hit in face (9).
15. An oriental takes the air in the London district (9).
17. Searching for singer (7).
18. Encourages the potential of ten others (7).
19. Decorative style of ship with nothing inside (7).
20. She appears in it when pictures tell a story (7).
22. 'We have done but greenly In hugger-mugger to —— him' *(Hamlet)* (5).
24. Game bird has this narrow crest in behind part (5).

SETSQUARE

Solution to No 1181



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Victor Charlie (Weeley)
Miss K. G. Lyford (Sutton)

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Further details may be obtained from the General Secretary, NATFHE, Hamilton House Mabledon Place WC1H 9BH. The closing date for applications is 19 October 1976.

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British Epilepsy Association

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marking envelope — Application.

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Further information should be obtained from the Academic Registrar, PO Box 4, Canberra, ACT, 2600 Australia, or from the Association of Commonwealth Universities (Appts), 36 Gordon Square, London WC1H 0PF.

Applications close on 15 November 1976.

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The appointments which it is hoped to make will be either at the Lecturer or Senior Lecturer level, depending upon qualifications and experience of the successful applicants. Applicants should have a good legal qualification and a substantial interest in another discipline, or should possess a good qualification in another discipline and a substantial interest in law related matters. Relevant tertiary teaching experience will also be taken into account.

CLOSING DATE FOR APPLICATIONS: It is hoped to make the appointments in two stages. For appointments made in the first stage, the closing date will be 1 November 1976. For appointments which it is hoped to make within the second stage, the closing date will be 31 January 1977.

Successful applicants at either stage should be able to take up their positions either on 1 February or 1 June 1977.

Inquiries may be directed in the first instance to the Chairman of the Department of Legal Studies, in the University.

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THEATRE ROYAL, WINDSOR. 95 61107. 28 Sept -16 Oct. 'The Earl and the Pussy Cat', a new comedy by Harold Brooke and Kay Bannerman with Michael Denison and Gwen Watford.

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Meetings

LABOUR COMMON MARKET SAFEGUARDS COMMITTEE

PRE CONFERENCE MEETING

Speakers:
Rt Hon. PETER SHORE MP
Mrs GWYNETH DUNWOODY MP
Mr GAVIN LAIRD, AUEW

Subject: Direct Elections

BARONIAL HALL
WINTER GARDENS
BLACKPOOL
4 p.m. Sunday, 26 September

All Welcome

LABOUR ECONOMIC FINANCE AND TAXATION ASSOCIATION

CONFERENCE TEA MEETING

Speaker:
Rt Hon. EDMUND DELL MP
Secretary of State for Trade
speaking on 'Import Controls'

WINDSOR BAR
WINTER GARDENS
BLACKPOOL
5.15 p.m.
Wednesday 29 September

All Welcome

Tickets 50p
From Conference stall or LEFTA
72 Albert St, London NW1 7NR

'WHAT RIGHT TO A CHILDHOOD' – for mentally handicapped children away from home. Hear Alf Morris MP, Minister for the Disabled, Bryan Roycroft, Director of Social Services for Newcastle-on-Tyne and Maureen Oswin, Campaign for the Mentally Handicapped, speak at Blackpool Town Hall at 6.15 p.m. on Monday 27 September 1976. All welcome. Chairman Millie Miller MP – organised by Labour Campaign for Mental Health. To be followed by a film.

CENTRAL LONDON FABIAN SOCIETY. Chris Broad, anarchist, on The Anarchist Way to Socialism. 7.30 p.m. 29 Sept. 5 Tavistock Place, WC1. Collection: all welc.

MAPAM & YOUNG MAPAM invites you to a joint meeting to be addressed by Yisrael Eilman. National Council Member of Mapam in Israel. Subject: 'Major Political Issues in Israel Today' at 37 Broadhurst Gardens, London NW6. Wed. 29 September at 8 p.m.

ISLINGTON FABIAN SOCIETY. Wed. 29 Sept. 8 p.m. Illtyd Harrington: 'London's Finances'. 295 Upper St, N1.

'1976 DELEGATION REPORT BACK from Albania'. Fri. 24 Sept. 7.30 p.m. Conway (Small) Hall, Red Lion Sq., WC1. New Albania Society.

HANSFORD-MILLER spks for England Sun. 3 Oct. Trafalgar Sq. 11 a.m.-2 p.m. ENP.

THE COMING WORLD TEACHER – the Christ and the Spiritual Hierarchy: from the esoteric Teachings of Alice A. Bailey for the New Age. Talks by Benjamin Creme, Friends' House, Euston Road, NW1. Thurs. 30 Sept. & Fri. 8 Oct. 7 p.m.

BUDDHIST SOCIETY, 58 Eccleston Square, London SW1. 24 Sept. 3 p.m. 'Open Day'. Tues. 28 Sept. 6.30 p.m. 'Introducing Buddhism'. Wed. 29 Sept. 6.30 p.m. Public Lecture – 'Buddhism & Meister Eckhart' – Maurice Walshe. All welcome. Send s.a.e. for full programme.

KARMA – FATE & FREEWILL. Sun. 26 Sept. 8 p.m. Talk & Questions. Free. S.a.e. for programme, pamphlets, book list. ULT, 62 Queen's Gardens, London W2 3AL.

Courses

INDIVIDUAL PSYCHOLOGY: The Science of the Life Style. A workshop of 10 sessions for both beginners and advanced students in Adlerian Psychology. Thursday 7-9 p.m. commencing 30 September at Mary Ward House 5-7 Tavistock Place, WC1. Tutor: Paul Rom L-ès-L DES. Details from ASGB, 11/414 Wimbledon Park Rd, London SW19.

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SHY MALE social worker, aged 22, wishes to meet unattached young female for exploratory relationship. Preferably Manchester area. Box 5244.

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